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**LANDOR'S
LONGER PROSE WORKS**



Aspasia.

THE PROSE WORKS

OF

WILLIAM THOMAS AND ISLAM

WITH A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR

BY

WILLIAM THOMAS

AND ISLAM

WITH A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR

BY

WILLIAM THOMAS

AND ISLAM

WITH A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR

BY

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AND ISLAM

WITH A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR

BY

WILLIAM THOMAS

AND ISLAM

BY WILLIAM THOMAS

AND ISLAM AT ALFIE

AT EASTON, N.J.



—

THE LONGER PROSE WORKS
OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR
EDITED WITH NOTES AND INDEX
BY CHARLES G. CRUMP

IN TWO VOLUMES



FIRST VOLUME

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS volume contains the two first of the Longer Prose Works of Landor, “The Citation and Examination of William Shakspeare,” and “Pericles and Aspasia.” The former of these was first published in 1834, together with the Conversation between Essex and Spenser, which is in the present edition reprinted among the Imaginary Conversations. A second edition with some alterations is included in the collected works published by Moxon in 1846. For the comparison of the two texts and the notes on the variations between them the Editor has to thank the care of Mr G. Le Gruys Norgate of Brasenose College. The book contains many local allusions to Warwickshire scenery and Warwickshire people. Landor was not indisposed to a little satire on the Lucy family, whom he had already mentioned in the Imaginary Conversation between Chaucer, Boccaccio, and Petrarca (Im. Conv., iv. 66). In 1831 Charles Lamb lent Landor James White’s “Letters of Falstaff” (Crabb Robinson’s Diary, i. 131). This may have turned his thoughts back to an old subject; in one of the conversations, burned in his quarrel with Mr Taylor, the speakers

were Shakspeare and Sir Thomas Lucy, and doubtless something of the old work survives in the present book.

“Pericles and Aspasia,” the second of the two works contained in this volume, was first published in 1836 in two octavo volumes, and afterwards republished with many additions in the Collected Works of 1846. Landor seems to have wished to include in it, as far as possible, all his thoughts and opinions upon the greatest period of Greek life. How far his treatment of an episode of Elizabethan life succeeds even as literature must always be a matter of personal taste. To historical accuracy the “Citation of Shakspeare” makes no pretence; but as literature “Pericles and Aspasia” stands first of Landor’s Longer Prose Works, and passages in it yield to few among the best of his Conversations. Even as a work of history, in spite of a few errors of detail, it is a fine study of the period it deals with. If Pericles and Aspasia and the group that surrounds them are a little idealised, it is still true that a refined conception of a great historical character leaves on the mind an impression nearer to the truth than could be got from a treatise, where the author has studied the dark side of character so carefully that it shows clearer than the bright one.



**CITATION AND EXAMINATION
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE,
Etc.**

CITATION AND EXAMINATION
or
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE
Etc.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.¹

“It was an ancestor of my husband who *brought out* the famous Shakspeare.”

These words were really spoken, and were repeated in conversation as most ridiculous. Certainly such was very far from the lady’s intention; and who knows to what extent they are true?

The frolic of Shakspeare in deer-stealing was the cause of his *Hegira*; and his connection with players in London was the cause of his writing plays. Had he remained in his native town, his ambition had never been excited by the applause of the intellectual, the popular, and the powerful, which, after all, was hardly sufficient to excite it. He wrote from the same motive as he acted,—to earn his daily bread. He felt his own powers; but he cared little for making them felt by others more than served his wants.

The malignant may doubt, or pretend to doubt, the authenticity of the *Examination* here published. Let us, who are

[¹ In 1st ed. the “Editor’s Preface” ends with the words, “practised theologian” (p. 5 in this edition). Of the remainder, a portion, headed, “Editor’s Apology,” appears at the end of the “Examination,” a “Post-Scriptum by me, Ephraim Barnett,” being interposed between them; while the “Memorandum” (“Memorandum by Ephraim Barnett, written upon the Inner Cover”) is appended to the “Conference between Essex and Spenser.”]

not malignant, be cautious of adding anything to the noisome mass of incredulity that surrounds us ; let us avoid the crying sin of our age, in which the “Memoirs of a Parish Clerk,” edited as they were by a pious and learned dignitary of the Established Church, are questioned in regard to their genuineness.²

Examinations taken from the mouth are surely the most trustworthy. Whoever doubts it may be convinced by Ephraim Barnett.³

The reader will form to himself, from this “Examination of Shakspeare,” a more favourable opinion of Sir Thomas than is left upon his mind by the dramatist in the character of Justice Shallow. The knight, indeed, is here exhibited in all his pride of birth and station, in all his pride of theologian and poet ; he is led by the nose, while he believes that nobody can move him, and shows some other weaknesses, which the least attentive observer will discover ; but he is not without a little kindness at the bottom of the heart,—a heart too contracted to hold much, or to let what it holds ebulliate very freely. But, upon the whole, we neither can utterly hate nor utterly despise him. Ungainly as he is,—

Circum præcordia ludit.

The author of the “Imaginary Conversations” seems, in his “Boccacio and Petrarca,” to have taken his idea of *Sir Magnus* from this manuscript. He, however, has adapted

[² First ed. reads: “genuineness ; and even the privileges of Parliament are inadequate to cover from the foulest imputation—the imputation of having exercised his inventive faculties—the elegant and accomplished editor of Eugene Aram’s apprehension, trial, and defence. Indeed, there is little of real history, excepting in romances. Some of these are strictly true to Nature ; while histories in general give a distorted view of her, and rarely a faithful record either of momentous or of common events. Examinations,” &c.]

[³ First ed. reads: “Barnett. The Editor is confident he can give no offence to any person who may happen to bear the name of Lucy. The family of Sir Thomas became extinct nearly half a century ago, and the estates descended to the Rev. Mr John Hammond, of Jesus College, in Oxford, a respectable Welsh curate, between whom and him there existed at his birth eighteen prior claimants. He took the name of Lucy. The reader,” &c.]

that character to the times ; and in *Sir Magnus* the coward rises to the courageous, the unskilful in arms becomes the skilful, and war is to him a teacher of humanity. With much superstition, theology never molests him ; scholarship and poetry are no affairs of his. He doubts of himself and others, and is as suspicious in his ignorance as Sir Thomas is confident.

With these wide diversities, there are family features, such as are likely to display themselves in different times and circumstances, and some so generically prevalent as never to lie quite dormant in the breed. In both of them there is parsimony, there is arrogance, there is contempt of inferiors, there is abject awe of power, there is irresolution, there is imbecility. But Sir Magnus has no knowledge, and no respect for it. Sir Thomas would almost go thirty miles, even to Oxford, to see a fine specimen of it, although, like most of those who call themselves the godly, he entertains the most undoubting belief that he is competent to correct the errors of the wisest and most practised theologian.

A part only of the many deficiencies which the reader will discover in this book is attributable to the Editor. These, however, it is his duty to account for, and he will do it as briefly as he can.

The *fac-similes* (as printers' boys call them, meaning *specimens*) of the handwriting of nearly all the persons introduced, might perhaps have been procured had sufficient time been allowed for another journey into Warwickshire. That of Shakspeare is known already in the signature to his will, but deformed by sickness ; that of Sir Thomas Lucy is extant at the bottom of a commitment of a female vagrant, for having a sucking child in her arms on the public road ; that of Silas Gough is affixed to the register of births and marriages, during several years, in the parishes of Hampton Lucy and Charlecote, and certifies one death,—Euseby Treen's ; surmised, at least, to be his by the letters "E. T." cut on a bench seven inches thick, under an old pollard-oak outside the park paling of Charlecote, toward the north-east. For this discovery the Editor is indebted to a most respectable, intelligent farmer in the adjoining parish of Wasperton, in which parish Treen's

elder brother lies buried. The worthy farmer is unwilling to accept the large portion of fame justly due to him for the services he has thus rendered to literature in elucidating the history of Shakspeare and his times. In possession of another agricultural gentleman there was recently a very curious piece of iron, believed by many celebrated antiquaries to have constituted a part of a knight's breast-plate. It was purchased for two hundred pounds by the trustees of the British Museum, among whom, the reader will be grieved to hear, it produced dissension and coldness; several of them being of opinion that it was merely a gorget, while others were inclined to the belief that it was the forepart of a horse-shoe. The Committee of Taste and the Heads of the Archæological Society were consulted. These learned, dispassionate, and benevolent men had the satisfaction of conciliating the parties at variance,—each having yielded somewhat and every member signing, and affixing his seal to the signature, that, if indeed it be the forepart of a horse-shoe, it was probably Ismael's,—there being a curved indentation along it, resembling the first letter of his name, and there being no certainty or record that he died in France, or was left in that country by Sir Magnus.

The Editor is unable to render adequate thanks to the Rev. Stephen Turnover for the gratification he received in his curious library by a sight of Joseph Carnaby's name at full length, in red ink, coming from a trumpet in the mouth of an angel. This invaluable document is upon an engraving in a frontispiece to the New Testament. But since unhappily he could procure no signature of Hannah Hathaway, nor of her mother, and only a questionable one of Mr John Shakspeare, the poet's father,—there being two, in two very different hands,—both he and the publisher were of opinion that the graphical part of the volume would be justly censured as extremely incomplete, and that what we could give would only raise inextinguishable regret for that which we could not. On this reflection all have been omitted.

The Editor is unwilling to affix any mark of disapprobation on the very clever engraver who undertook the sorrel mare; but as in the memorable words of that ingenious gentleman

from Ireland whose polished and elaborate epigrams raised him justly to the rank of prime minister,—

“ White was not *so very* white,”—

in like manner it appeared to nearly all the artists he consulted that the sorrel mare was not *so sorrel* in print.

There⁴ is another and a graver reason why the Editor was induced to reject the contribution of his friend the engraver; and this is, a neglect of the late improvements in his art, he having, unadvisedly or thoughtlessly, drawn in the old-fashioned manner lines at the two sides and at the top and bottom of his print, confining it to such limits as paintings are confined in by their frames. Our spirited engravers, it is well-known, disdain this thraldom, and not only give unbounded space to their scenery, but also melt their figures in the air,—so advantageously, that, for the most part, they approach the condition of cherubs. This is the true aerial perspective, so little understood heretofore. Trees, castles, rivers, volcanoes, oceans, float together in absolute vacancy; the solid earth is represented, what we know it actually is, buoyant as a bubble, so that no wonder if every horse is endued with all the privileges of Pegasus, save and except our sorrel. Malicious carpers, insensible or invidious of England’s glory, deny her in this beautiful practice the merit of invention, assigning it to the Chinese in their tea-cups and saucers; but if not absolutely new and ours, it must be acknowledged that we have greatly improved and extended the invention.

Such are the reasons why the little volume here laid before the public is defective in those decorations which the exalted state of literature demands. Something of compensation is supplied by a Memorandum of Ephraim Barnett, written upon the inner cover, and printed below.

The Editor, it will be perceived, is but little practised in the ways of literature; much less is he gifted with that prophetic spirit which can anticipate the judgment of the public. It may be that he is too idle or too apathetic to think anxiously

[⁴ From “There” to “invention,” 27 lines, added in 2nd ed.]

or much about the matter ; and yet he has been amused, in his earlier days, at watching the first appearance of such few books as he believed to be the production of some powerful intellect. He has seen people slowly rise up to them, like carp in a pond when food is thrown into it ; some of which carp snatch suddenly at a morsel, and swallow it ; others touch it gently with their barb, pass deliberately by, and leave it ; others wriggle and rub against it more disdainfully ; others, in sober truth, know not what to make of it, swim round and round it, eye it on the sunny side, eye it on the shady, approach it, question it, shoulder it, flap it with the tail, turn it over, look askance at it, take a pea-shell or a worm instead of it, and plunge again their heads into the comfortable mud.⁵

[⁵ Third ed. reads : "mud. After some seasons the same food will suit their stomachs better."]

MEMORANDUM.

STUDYING the benefit and advantage of such as by God's blessing may come after me, and willing to shew them the highways of Providence from the narrow by-lane in the which it hath been his pleasure to station me, and being now advanced full-nigh unto the close and consummation of my earthly pilgrimage, methinks I cannot do better, at this juncture, than preserve the looser and lesser records of those who have gone before me in the same, with higher heel-piece to their shoe and more polished scallop to their beaver. And here, beforehand, let us think gravely and religiously on what the pagans, in their blindness, did call fortune, making a goddess of her, and saying,—

“ One body she lifts up so high
And suddenly, she makes him cry
And scream as any wench might do
That you should play the rogue unto.
And the same Lady Light sees good
To drop another in the mud,
Against all hope and likelihood.” *

My kinsman, Jacob Eldridge, having been taught by me, among other useful things, to write a fair and laudable hand, was recommended and introduced by our worthy townsman, Master Thomas Greene, unto the Earl of Essex, to keep his accounts, and to write down sundry matters from his dictation, even letters occasionally. For although our nobility, very unlike the French, not only can read and write, but often do, yet some from generosity, and some from dignity, keep in their employment what those who are illiterate, and would not appear

* The editor has been unable to discover who was the author of this very free translation of an Ode in Horace. He is certainly happy in his amplification of the *stridore acuto*. May it not be surmised that he was some favourite scholar of Ephraim Barnett?

so, call an *amanuensis*, thereby meaning *secretary* or *scribe*. Now it happened that our gracious queen's highness was desirous of knowing all that could be known about the Rebellion in Ireland; and hearing but little truth from her nobility in that country, even the fathers in God inclining more unto court favour than will be readily believed of spiritual lords, and moulding their ductile depositions on the pasteboard of their temporal mistress, until she was angry at seeing the lawn-sleeves so besmirched from wrist to elbow, she herself did say unto the Earl of Essex,—

“Essex! these fellows lie! I am inclined to unfrock and scourge them sorely for their leasings. Of that anon. Find out, if you can, somebody who hath his wit and his honesty about him at the same time. I know that when one of these paniers is full the other is apt to be empty, and that men walk crookedly for want of balance. No matter—we must search and find. Persuade—thou canst persuade, Essex!—say any thing, do any thing. We must talk gold and give iron. Dost understand me?

The earl did kiss the jewels upon the dread fingers, for only the last joint of each is visible; and surely no mortal was ever so foolhardy as to take such a monstrous liberty as touching it, except in spirit! On the next day there did arrive many fugitives from Ireland; and among the rest was Master Edmund Spenser, known even in those parts for his rich vein of poetry, in which he is declared by our best judges to excell the noblest of the ancients, and to leave all the moderns at his feet. Whether he notified his arrival unto the earl, or whether fame brought the notice thereof unto his lordship, Jacob knoweth not. But early in the morrow did the earl send for Jacob, and say unto him,—

“Eldridge! thou must write fairly and clearly out, and in somewhat large letters, and in lines somewhat wide apart, all that thou hearest of the conversation I shall hold with a gentleman from Ireland. Take this gilt and illuminated vellum, and albeit the civet make thee sick fifty times, write upon it all that passes! Come not out of the closet until the gentleman hath gone homeward. The queen requireth much exactness; and this is equally a man of genius, a man of business, and a man

of worth. I expect from him not only what is true, but what is the most important and necessary to understand rightly and completely ; and nobody in existence is more capable of giving me both information and advice. Perhaps if he thought another were within hearing he would be offended or over-cautious. His delicacy and mine are warranted safe and sound by the observance of those commands which I am delivering unto thee."

It happened that no information was given in this conference relating to the movements or designs of the rebels. So that Master Jacob Eldridge was left possessor of the costly vellum, which, now Master Spenser is departed this life, I keep as a memorial of him, albeit oftener than once I have taken pounce box and penknife in hand, in order to make it a fit and proper vehicle for my own very best writing. But I pretermitted it, finding that my hand is no longer the hand it was, or rather that the breed of geese is very much degenerated, and that their quills, like men's manners, are grown softer and flaccider. Where it will end God only knows ; I shall not live to see it.

Alas, poor Jacob Eldridge ! he little thought that within twelve months his glorious master, and the scarcely less glorious poet, would be no more ! In the third week of the following year was Master Edmund buried at the charges of the earl ; and within these few days hath this lofty nobleman bowed his head under the axe of God's displeasure ; such being our gracious queen's. My kinsman Jacob sent unto me by the Alcester drover, old Clem Fisher, this, among other papers, fearing the wrath of that offended highness which allowed not her own sweet disposition to question or thwart the will divine. Jacob did likewise tell me in his letter that he was sure I should be happy to hear the success of William Shakspeare, our townsman. And in truth right glad was I to hear of it, being a principal in bringing it about, as those several sheets will shew which have the broken tile laid upon them to keep them down compactly.

Jacob's words are these :

" Now I speak of poets, you will be in a maze at hearing that our townsman hath written a power of matter for the

playhouse. Neither he nor the booksellers think it quite good enough to print ; but I do assure you, on the faith of a Christian, it is not bad ; and there is rare fun in the last thing of his about Venus, where a Jew, one Shiloh, is choused out of his money and his revenge. However, the best critics and the greatest lords find fault, and very justly, in the words,

“ ‘Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is?’

“ Surely, this is very unchristianlike. Nay, for supposition sake, suppose it to be true, was it his business to tell the people so? Was it his duty to ring the crier’s bell and cry to them, *The sorry Jews are quite as much men as you are?*⁶ The church, luckily, has let him alone for the present ; and the queen winks upon it. The best defence he can make for himself is that it comes from the mouth of a Jew, who says many other things as abominable. Master Greene may overrate him ; but Master Greene declares that if William goes on improving and taking his advice, it will be desperate hard work in another seven years to find so many as half a dozen chaps equal to him within the liberties. Master Greene and myself took him with us to see the burial of Master Edmund Spenser in Westminster Abbey, on the 19th of January last. The halberdmen pushed us back as having no business there. Master Greene told them he belonged to the queen’s company of players. William Shakspeare could have said the same, but did not. And I, fearing that Master Greene and he might be halberded back into the crowd, shewed the badge of the Earl of Essex. Whereupon did the serjeant ground his halberd, and say unto me,—

“ ‘That badge commands admittance everywhere ; your folk likewise may come in.’

“ Master Greene was red-hot angry, and told me he would bring him before the *council*.

[⁶ First ed. reads : “ *as you are.* The impudentest thing (excepting some baudieries) that ever came from the stage! ‘The church,’ &c.]

“ William smiled, and Master Greene said,—

“ ‘ Why ! would not you, if you were in my place ? ’

“ He replied,—

“ ‘ I am an half inclined to do worse,—to bring him before the *audience* some spare hour.’

“ At the close of the burial-service all the poets of the age threw their pens into the grave, together with the pieces they had composed in praise or lamentation of the deceased. William Shakespeare was the only poet who abstained from throwing in either pen or poem ; at which no one marvelled, he being of low estate, and the others not having yet taken him by the hand. Yet many authors recognised him, not indeed as author, but as player ; and one, civiller than the rest, came up unto him triumphantly, his eyes sparkling with glee and satisfaction, and said, consolatorily,—

“ ‘ In due time, my honest friend, you may be admitted to do as much for one of us.’ ”

“ ‘ After such encouragement,’ replied our townsman, “ I am bound in duty to give you the preference, should I indeed be worthy.’ ”

“ This was the only smart thing he uttered all the remainder of the day ; during the whole of it he appeared to be half-lost, I know not whether in melancholy or in meditation, and soon left us.”

Here endeth all that my kinsman Jacob wrote about William Shakspeare, saving and excepting his excuse for having written so much. The rest of his letter was on a matter of wider and weightier import, namely, on the price of Cotteswolde cheese at Evesham fair. And yet, although ingenious men be not among the necessaries of life, there is something in them that makes us curious in regard to their goings and doings. It were to be wished that some of them had attempted to be better accountants ; and others do appear to have laid aside the copybook full early in the day. Nevertheless, they have their uses and their merits. Master Eldridge’s letter is the wrapper of much wholesome food for contemplation. Although the decease (within so brief a period) of such a poet as Master Spenser, and such a patron as the earl, be unto us appalling, we laud and magnify the great Disposer of events, no less

for his goodness in raising the humble than for his power in extinguishing the great. And peradventure ye, my heirs and descendants, who shall read with due attention what my pen now writeth, will say, with the royal Psalmist, that it inditeth of a good matter, when it sheweth unto you that, whereas it pleased the queen's highness to send a great lord before the judgment-seat of Heaven, having fitted him by means of such earthly instruments as princes in like cases do usually employ, and deeming (no doubt) in her princely heart that by such shrewd tonsure his head would be best fitted for a crown of glory, and thus doing all that she did out of the purest and most considerate love for him, . . . it likewise hath pleased her highness to use her right hand as freely as her left, and to raise up a second burgess of our town to be one of her company of players. And ye, also, by industry and loyalty, may cheerfully hope for promotion in your callings, and come up (some of you) as nearly to him in the presence of royalty, as he cometh up (far off, indeed, at present) to the great and wonderful poet who lies dead among more spices than any phoenix, and more quills than any porcupine. If this thought may not prick and incite you, little is to be hoped from any gentle admonition, or any earnest exhortation, of

Your loving friend and kinsman,

E. B.

ANNO ÆT. SUEÆ 74, DOM. 1599,
DECEMB. 16;
GLORIA DP. DF. ET DSS.
AMOR VERSUS VIRGINEM REGINAM!
PROTESTANTICE LOQUOR ET HONESTO SENSU:
OBTESTOR CONSCIENTIAM MEAM!

EXAMINATION

ETC., ETC.

ABOUT one hour before noontide the youth **WILLIAM SHAK-SPEARE**, accused of deer-stealing, and apprehended for that offence, was brought into the great hall at Charlecote, where, having made his obeisance, it was most graciously permitted him to stand.

The worshipful Sir Thomas Lucy, Knight, seeing him right opposite, on the farther side of the long table, and fearing no disadvantage, did frown upon him with great dignity ; then, deigning ne'er a word to the culprit, turned he his face toward his chaplain, Sir Silas Gough, who stood beside him, and said unto him most courteously, and unlike unto one who in his own right commandeth,—

“ Stand out of the way ! What are those two varlets bringing into the room ? ”

“ The table, sir,” replied Master Silas, “ upon the which the consumption of the venison was perpetrated.”

The youth, William Shakespeare, did therefore pray and beseech his lordship most fervently, in this guise :—

“ Oh, sir ! do not let him turn the tables against me, who am only a simple stripling, and he an old coger ! ”

But Master Silas did bite his nether lip, and did cry aloud,—

“ Look upon those deadly spots ! ”

And his worship did look thereupon most staidly, and did say in the ear of Master Silas, but in such wise that it reached even unto mine,

“ Good honest chandlery, methinks ! ”

“ God grant it may turn out so ! ” ejaculated Master Silas.

The youth, hearing these words, said unto him,—

“ I fear, Master Silas, gentry like you often pray God to

grant what *he* would rather not ; and now and then what *you* would rather not.”

Sir Silas was wroth at this rudeness of speech about God in the face of a preacher, and said, reprovingly,—

“Out upon thy foul mouth, knave ! upon which lie slaughter and venison.”

Whereupon did William Shakspeare sit mute awhile, and discomfited ; then turning toward Sir Thomas, and looking and speaking as one submiss and contrite, he thus appealed unto him :—

“Worshipful sir ! were there any signs of venison on my mouth, Master Silas could not for his life cry out upon it, nor help kissing it as 'twere a wench's.”

Sir Thomas looked upon him with most lordly gravity and wisdom, and said unto him, in a voice that might have come from the bench :

“Youth, thou speakest irreverently ;” and then unto Master Silas : “Silas ! to the business on hand. Taste the fat upon yon boor's table, which the constable hath brought hither, good Master Silas ! And declare upon oath, being sworn in my presence, first, whether said fat do proceed of venison ; secondly, whether said venison be of buck or doe.”

Whereupon the reverend Sir Silas did go incontinently, and did bend forward his head, shoulders, and body, and did severally taste four white solid substances upon an oaken board ; said board being about two yards long, and one yard four inches wide ; found in, and brought thither from, the tenement or messuage of Andrew Haggit, who hath absconded. Of these four white solid substances, two were somewhat larger than a groat, and thicker ; one about the size of King Henry the Eighth's shilling, when our late sovereign lord of blessed memory was toward the lustiest ; and the other, that is to say the middlemost, did resemble in some sort, a mushroom, not over fresh, turned upward on its stalk.

“And what sayest thou, Master Silas ?” quoth the knight. In reply whereunto Sir Silas thus averred :—

“Venison ! o' my conscience !
Buck ! or burn me alive !

The three splashes in the circumference are verily and indeed venison; buck, moreover, and Charlecote buck, upon my oath!"

Then carefully tasting the protuberance in the centre, he spat it out, crying,—

" *Pbo! pbo! villain! villain!*" and shaking his fist at the culprit.

Whereat the said culprit smiled and winked, and said off-hand,—

" Save thy spittle, Silas! It would supply a gaudy mess to the hungriest litter; but it would turn them from whelps into wolvets. 'T is pity to throw the best of thee away. Nothing comes out of thy mouth that is not savoury and solid, bating thy wit, thy sermons, and thy promises."

It was my duty to write down the very words, irreverent as they are, being so commanded. More of the like, it is to be feared, would have ensued, but that Sir Thomas did check him, saying, shrewdly,—

" Young man! I perceive that if I do not stop thee in thy courses, thy name, being involved in thy company's, may one day or other reach across the county; and folks may handle it and turn it about, as it deserveth, from Coleshill to Nuneaton, from Bromwicham to Brownsover. And who knoweth but that, years after thy death, the very house wherein thou wert born may be pointed at, and commented on, by knots of people, gentle and simple! What a shame for an honest man's son! Thanks to me, who consider of measures to prevent it! Posterity shall laud and glorify me for plucking thee clean out of her head, and for picking up timely a ticklish skittle, that might overthrow with it a power of others just as light. I will rid the hundred of thee, with God's blessing!—nay, the whole shire. We will have none such in our county; we justices are agreed upon it, and we will keep our word now and forevermore. Woe betide any that resembles thee in any part of him!"

Whereunto Sir Silas added,—

" We will dog him, and worry him, and haunt him, and bedevil him; and if ever he hear a comfortable word, it shall be in a language very different from his own."

“As different as thine is from a Christian’s,” said the youth.

“Boy! thou art slow of apprehension,” said Sir Thomas, with much gravity; and taking up the cue, did rejoin,—

“Master Silas would impress upon thy ductile and tender mind the danger of evil doing; that we, in other words that justice is resolved to follow him up, even beyond his country, where he shall hear nothing better than the Italian or the Spanish, or the black language, or the language of Turk or Troubadour, or Tartar or Mongle. And, forsooth, for this gentle and indirect reproof, a gentleman in priest’s orders is told by a stripling that he lacketh Christianity! Who then shall give it?”

Shakspeare. Who, indeed? when the founder of the feast leaveth an invited guest so empty! Yea, sir, the guest was invited, and the board was spread. The fruits that lay upon it be there still, and fresh as ever; and the bread of life in those capacious canisters is unconsumed and unbroken.

Sir Silas (aside). The knave maketh me hungry with his mischievous similitudes.

Sir Thomas. Thou hast aggravated thy offence, Will Shakspeare! Irreverent caitiff! is this a discourse for my chaplain and clerk? Can he or the worthy scribe Ephraim (his worship was pleased to call me worthy) write down such words as those, about litter and wolvets, for the perusal and meditation of the grand jury? If the whole corporation of Stratford had not unanimously given it against thee, still his tongue would catch thee, as the evet catcheth a gnat. Know, sirrah, the reverend Sir Silas, albeit ill appointed for riding, and not over-fond of it, goeth to every house wherein is a venison feast for thirty miles round. Not a buck’s hoof on any stable-door but it awakeneth his recollections like a red letter.

This wholesome reproof did bring the youth back again to his right senses; and then said he, with contrition, and with a wisdom beyond his years, and little to be expected from one who had spoken just before so unadvisedly and rashly,—

“Well do I know it, your worship! And verily do I

believe that a bone of one being shovelled among the soil upon his coffin would forthwith quicken * him. Sooth to say, there is ne'er a buckhound in the county but he treateth him as a godchild, patting him on the head, soothing his velvety ear between thumb and forefinger, ejecting tick from tenement, calling him ‘*fine fellow*,’ ‘*noble lad*,’ and giving him his blessing, as one dearer to him than a king’s debt to a debtor,† or a bastard to a dad of eighty. This is the only kindness I ever heard of Master Silas toward his fellow-creatures. Never hold me unjust, Sir Knight, to Master Silas. Could I learn other good of him, I would freely say it; for we do good by speaking it, and none is easier. Even bad men are not bad men while they praise the just. Their first step backward is more troublesome and wrenching to them than the first forward.”

“In God’s name, where did he gather all this?” whispered his worship to the chaplain, by whose side I was sitting. “Why, he talks like a man of forty-seven, or more!”

“I doubt his sincerity, sir!” replied the chaplain. “His words are fairer now—”

“Devil choke him for them!” interjected he, with an undervoice.

“— and almost book-worthy; but out of place. What the scurvy cur yelped against me, I forgive him as a Christian. Murrain upon such varlet vermin! It is but of late years that dignities have come to be reviled. The other parts of the Gospel were broken long before; this was left us; and now this likewise is to be kicked out of doors, amid the mutterings of such mooncalves as him yonder.”

“Too true, Silas!” said the knight, sighing deeply. “Things are not as they were in our glorious wars of York and Lancaster. The knaves were thinned then; two or three crops a year of that rank squitch-grass⁷ which it has become

* Quicken, bring to life.

† Debtors were often let out of prison at the coronation of a new king; but creditors never paid by him.

[⁷ First ed. reads: “*bent* grass.”]

the fashion of late to call the people. There was some difference then between buff doublets and iron mail ; and the rogues felt it. Well-a-day ! we must bear what God willeth, and never repine, although it gives a man the heart-ache. We are bound in duty to keep these things for the closet, and to tell God of them only when we call upon his holy name, and have him quite by ourselves.”

Sir Silas looked discontented and impatient, and said, snappishly,—

“ Cast we off here, or we shall be at fault. Start him, sir ! prithee, start him.”

Again his worship, Sir Thomas, did look gravely and grandly, and taking a scrap of paper out of the Holy Book then lying before him, did read distinctly these words :—

“ Providence hath sent Master Silas back hither, this morning, to confound thee in thy guilt.”

Again, with all the courage and composure of an innocent man, and indeed with more than what an innocent man ought to possess in the presence of a magistrate, the youngster said, pointing toward Master Silas,

“ The first moment he ventureth to lift up his visage from the table, hath Providence marked him miraculously. I have heard of black malice. How many of our words have more in them than we think of ! Give a countryman a plough of silver, and he will plough with it all the season, and never know its substance. ”Tis thus with our daily speech. What riches lie hidden in the vulgar tongue of the poorest and most ignorant ! What flowers of Paradise lie under our feet, with their beauties and parts undistinguished and undiscerned, from having been daily trodden on ! O, sir, look you ! but let me cover my eyes ! Look at his lips ! Gracious Heaven ! they were not thus when he entered. They are blacker now than Harry Tewe’s bull-bitch’s ! ”

Master Silas did lift up his eyes in astonishment and wrath ; and his worship, Sir Thomas, did open his wider and wider, and cried by fits and starts :—

“ Gramercy ! true enough ! nay, afore God, too true by half ! I never saw the like ! Who would believe it ? I wish I were fairly rid of this examination, my hands washed

clean thereof! Another time,—anon! We have our quarterly sessions! We are many together: at present I remand—”

And now, indeed, unless Sir Silas had taken his worship by the sleeve, he would mayhap have remanded the lad. But Sir Silas, still holding the sleeve and shaking it, said, hurriedly,

“Let me entreat your worship to ponder. What black does the fellow talk of? My blood and bile rose up against the rogue; but surely I did not turn black in the face, or in the mouth, as the fellow calls it?”

Whether Master Silas had some suspicion and inkling of the cause or not, he rubbed his right hand along his face and lips, and, looking upon it, cried aloud,—

“Ho, ho! is it off? There is some upon my finger’s end, I find. Now I have it, ay, there it is. That large splash upon the centre of the table is tallow, by my salvation! The profligates sat up until the candle burned out, and the last of it ran through the socket upon the board. We knew it before. I did convey into my mouth both fat and smut!”

“Many of your cloth and kidney do that, good Master Silas, and make no wry faces about it,” quoth the youngster, with indiscreet merriment, although short of laughter, as became him who had already stepped too far and reached the mire.

To save paper and time, I shall now, for the most part, write only what they all said, not saying that they said it, and just copying out in my clearest hand what fell respectively from their mouths.

Sir Silas. I did indeed spit it forth, and emunge my lips, as who should not?

Shakspeare. Would it were so!

Sir Silas. *Would it were so!* in thy teeth, hypocrite!

Sir Thomas. And, truly, I likewise do incline to hope and credit it, as thus paraphrased and expounded.

Shakspeare. Wait until this blessed day next year, sir, at the same hour. You shall see it forth again at its due season; it would be no miracle if it lasted. Spittle may cure sore eyes, but not blasted mouths and scald consciences.

Sir Thomas. Why! who taught thee all this? . . .

Then turned he leisurely toward Sir Silas, and placing his hand outspreaden upon the arm of the chaplain, said unto him in a low, judicial, hollow voice,

“Every word true and solemn! I have heard less wise saws from between black covers.”

Sir Silas was indignant at this under-rating, as he appeared to think it, of the church and its ministry, and answered impatiently, with Christian freedom,—

“Your worship surely will not listen to this wild wizard in his brothel-pulpit!”

Shakspeare. Do I live to hear Charlecote Hall called a brothel-pulpit? Alas, then, I have lived too long!

Sir Silas. We will try to amend that for thee. . . .

William seemed not to hear him, loudly as he spake and pointedly unto the youngster, who wiped his eyes, crying,

“Commit me, sir! in mercy commit me! Master Ephraim! Oh, Master Ephraim! A guiltless man may feel all the pangs of the guilty! Is it you who are to make out the commitment? Dispatch! dispatch! I am a-weary of my life. If I dared to lie, I would plead guilty.”

Sir Thomas. Heyday! No wonder, Master Ephraim, thy entrails are moved and wamble. Dost weep, lad? Nay, nay; thou bearest up bravely. Silas, I now find, although the example come before me from humble life, that what my mother said was true; 'twas upon my father's demise. “In great grief there are few tears.”

Upon which did the youth, Willy Shakspeare, jog himself by the memory, and repeat these short verses, not wide from the same purport:

“There are, alas, some depths of woe
Too vast for tears to overflow.”

Sir Thomas. Let those who are sadly vexed in spirit mind that notion, whoever indited it, and be men: I always was; but some little griefs have pinched me woundily. . . .

Master Silas grew impatient, for he had ridden hard that morning, and had no cushion upon his seat, as Sir Thomas had. I have seen in my time that he who is seated on beech-

wood hath very different thoughts and moralities from him who is seated on goose-feathers under doe-skin. But that is neither here nor there, albeit, an' I die, as I must, my heirs, Judith and her boy Elijah, may note it.

Master Silas, as above, looked sourishly, and cried aloud,

“The witnesses! the witnesses! testimony! testimony! We shall now see whose black goes deepest. There is a fork to be had that can hold the slipperiest eel, and a finger that can strip the slimiest. I cry your worship to the witnesses.”

Sir Thomas. Ay, indeed, we are losing the day; it wastes toward noon, and nothing done. Call the witnesses. How are they called by name? Give me the paper. . . .

The paper being forthwith delivered into his worship's hand by the learned clerk, his worship did read aloud the name of Euseby Treen. Whereupon did Euseby Treen come forth through the great hall-door which was ajar, and answer most audibly,

“Your worship! ”

Straightway did Sir Thomas read aloud, in like form and manner, the name of Joseph Carnaby; and in like manner as aforesaid did Joseph Carnaby make answer and say,—

“Your worship! ”

Lastly did Sir Thomas turn the light of his countenance on William Shakspeare, saying,

“Thou seest these good men deponents against thee, William Shakspeare.”

And then did Sir Thomas pause. And pending this pause did William Shakspeare look stedfastly in the faces of both; and stroking down his own with the hollow of his hand from the jaw-bone to the chin-point, said unto his honour,

“Faith! it would give me much pleasure, and the neighbourhood much vantage, to see these two fellows good men. Joseph Carnaby and Euseby Treen! Why! your worship! they know every hare's form in Luddington-field better than their own beds, and as well pretty nigh as any wench's in the parish.”

Then turned he with jocular scoff unto Joseph Carnaby,

thus accosting him, whom his shirt, being made stiffer than usual for the occasion, rubbed and frayed.

“Ay, Joseph ! smoothen and soothe thy collar-piece again and again ! Hark ye ! I know what smock that was knavishly cut from.”

Master Silas rose up in high choler, and said unto *Sir Thomas*,

“Sir ! do not listen to that lewd reviler ; I wager ten groats I prove him to be wrong in his scent. Joseph Carnaby is righteous and discreet.”

Shakspeare. By daylight and before the parson. Bears and boars are tame creatures, and discreet, in the sunshine and after dinner.

Treen. I do know his down-goings and up-risings.

Shakspeare. The man and his wife are one, saith holy Scripture.

Treen. A sober-paced and rigid man, if such there be. Few keep Lent like unto him.

Shakspeare. I warrant him, both lent and stolen.

Sir Thomas. Peace and silence ! Now, Joseph Carnaby, do thou depose on particulars.

Carnaby. May it please your worship ! I was returning from Hampton upon Allhallowmas eve, between the hours of ten and eleven at night, in company with Master Euseby Treen ; and when we came to the bottom of Mickle Meadow, we heard several men in discourse. I plucked Euseby Treen by the doublet, and whispered in his ear, “Euseby ! Euseby ! let us slink along in the shadow of the elms and willows.”

Treen. *Willows and elm-trees* were the words.

Shakspeare. See, your worship ! what discordances ! They cannot agree in their own story.

Sir Silas. The same thing, the same thing, in the main.

Shakspeare. By less differences than this estates have been lost, hearts broken, and England, our country, filled with homeless, helpless, destitute orphans. I protest against it.

Sir Silas. Protest, indeed ! He talks as if he were a member of the House of Lords. They alone can protest.

Sir Thomas. Your attorney may *object*, not *protest*, before the lord judge. Proceed you, Joseph Carnaby.

Carnaby. In the shadow of the willows and elm-trees, then—

Shakspeare. No hints, no conspiracies! Keep to your own story, man, and do not borrow his.

Sir Silas. I overrule the objection. Nothing can be more futile and frivolous.

Shakspeare. So learned a magistrate as your worship will surely do me justice by hearing me attentively. I am young; nevertheless, having more than one year written in the office of an attorney, and having heard and listened to many discourses and questions on law, I cannot but remember the heavy fine inflicted on a gentleman of this county who committed a poor man to prison for being in possession of a hare, it being proved that the hare was in his possession, and not he in the hare's.

Sir Silas. Synonymous term! synonymous term!

Sir Thomas. In what term sayest thou was it? I do not remember the case.

Sir Silas. Mere quibble! mere equivocation! Jesuitical! Jesuitical!

Shakspeare. It would be Jesuitical, Sir Silas, if it dragged the law by its perversions to the side of oppression and cruelty. The order of Jesuits, I fear, is as numerous as its tenets are lax and comprehensive. I am sorry to see their frocks flounced with English serge.

Sir Silas. I don't understand thee, viper!

Sir Thomas. Cease thou, Will Shakspeare! Know thy place. And do thou, Joseph Carnaby, take up again the thread of thy testimony.

Carnaby. We were still at some distance from the party, when on a sudden Euseby hung an—*⁸

Sir Thomas. As well write *drew back*, Master Ephraim and Master Silas! Be circumspecter in speech, Master Joseph Carnaby! I did not look for such rude phrases from that starch-warehouse under thy chin. Continue, man?

* The word here omitted is quite illegible.

[⁸ In 1st ed. this note reads: "unintelligible. It appears to have some reference to the language of the Highlanders. That it was rough and outlandish is apparent from the reprimand of Sir Thomas."]

Carnaby. "Euseby," said I in his ear, "what ails thee, Euseby?" "I wag no farther," quoth he. "What a number of names and voices!"

Sir Thomas. Dreadful gang! a number of names and voices! Had it been any other day in the year but Allhallowmas eve! To steal a buck upon such a day! Well! God may pardon even that. Go on, go on. But the laws of our country must have their satisfaction and atonement. Were it upon any other day in the calendar less holy, the buck were nothing, or next to nothing, saving the law and our conscience and our good report. Yet we, her Majesty's justices, must stand in the gap, body and soul, against evil-doers. Now do thou, in furtherance of this business, give thine aid unto us, Joseph Carnaby! remembering that mine eye from this judgment-seat, and her Majesty's bright and glorious one overlooking the whole realm, and the broader of God above, are upon thee. . . .

Carnaby did quail a matter at these words about the judgment-seat and the broad eye, aptly and gravely delivered by him moreover who hath to administer truth and righteousness in our ancient and venerable laws, and especially, at the present juncture, in those against park-breaking and deer-stealing. But finally, nought discomfited, and putting his hand valiantly atwixt hip and midriff, so that his elbow well-nigh touched the taller pen in the ink-pot, he went on.

Carnaby. "*In the shadow of the willows and elm-trees,*" said he, "*and get nearer.*" We were still at some distance, maybe a score of furlongs, from the party—

Sir Thomas. Thou hast said it already—all save the score of furlongs.

Hast room for them, Master Silas?

Sir Silas. Yea, and would make room for fifty, to let the fellow swing at his ease.

Sir Thomas. Hast room, Master Ephraim?

"'Tis done, most worshipful!" said I. The learned knight did not recollect that I could put fifty furlongs in a needle's eye, give me pen fine enough.

But far be it from me to vaunt of my penmanship, although there be those who do malign it, even in my own township

and parish ; yet they never have unperched me from my calling, and have had hard work to take an idle wench or two from under me on Saturday nights.

I memorize thus much, not out of any malice or any soreness about me, but that those of my kindred into whose hands it please God these papers do fall hereafter, may bear up stoutly in such straits ; and if they be good at the cudgel, that they, looking first at their man, do give it him heartily and unsparingly, keeping within law.

Sir Thomas, having overlooked what we had written, and meditated a while thereupon, said unto *Joseph*,

“ It appeareth by thy testimony that there was a huge and desperate gang of them afoot. Revengeful dogs ! it is difficult to deal with them. The laws forbid precipitancy and violence. A dozen or two may return and harm me ; not me, indeed, but my tenants and servants. I would fain act with prudence, and like unto him who looketh abroad. He must tie his shoe tightly who passeth through mire ; he must step softly who steppeth over stones ; he must walk in the fear of the Lord (which, without a brag, I do at this present feel upon me), who hopeth to reach the end of the straightest road in safety.”

Sir Silas. Tut, tut ! your worship ! Her Majesty’s deputy hath matchlocks and halters at a knight’s disposal, or the world were topsy-turvy indeed.

Sir Thomas. My mental ejaculations, and an influx of grace thereupon, have shaken and washed from my brain all thy last words, good *Joseph* ! Thy companion here, *Euseby Treen*, said unto thee ay ? . . .

Carnaby. Said unto me, “ What a number of names and voices ! And there be but three living men in all ! And look again ! Christ deliver us ! all the shadows save one go leftward : that one lieth right upon the river. It seemeth a big, squat monster, shaking a little, as one ready to spring upon its prey.”

Sir Thomas. A dead man in his last agonies, no doubt ! Your deer-stealer doth boggle at nothing. He hath alway the knife in doublet and the devil at elbow.

I wot not of any keeper killed or missing. To lose one’s deer and keeper too were overmuch.

Do, in God's merciful name, hand unto me a glass of sack, Master Silas ! I wax faintish at the big, squat man. He hath harmed not only me, but mine. Furthermore, the examination is grown so long. . . .

Then was the wine delivered by Sir Silas into the hand of his worship, who drank it off in a beaker of about half a pint, but little to his satisfaction : for he said shortly afterward,

“ Hast thou poured no water into the sack, good Master Silas ? It seemeth weaker and washier than ordinary, and affordeth small comfort unto the breast and stomach.”

Sir Silas. Not I, truly, sir, and the bottle is a fresh and sound one. The cork reported on drawing, as the best diver doth on sousing from Warwick bridge into Avon. A rare cork ! as bright as the glass bottle, and as smooth as the lips of any cow.

Sir Thomas. My mouth is out of taste this morning ; or the same wine, mayhap, hath a different force and flavour in the dining-room and among friends. But to business. What more ?

Carnaby. “ Euseby Treen, what may it be ? ” said I.

“ I know, ” quoth he, “ but dare not breathe it.”

Sir Thomas. I thought I had taken a glass of wine, verily. Attention to my duty as a magistrate is paramount. I mind nothing else when that lies before me.

Carnaby ! I credit thy honesty, but doubt thy manhood. Why not breathe it, with a vengeance ?

Carnaby. It was Euseby who dared not.

Sir Thomas. Stand still ! Say nothing yet ; mind my orders : fair and softly : compose thyself. . . .

They all stood silent for some time, and looked very composed, awaiting the commands of the knight. His mind was clearly in such a state of devotion that peradventure he might not have descended for a while longer to his mundane duties, had not Master Silas told him that, under the shadow of his wing, their courage had returned and they were quite composed again.

“ You may proceed, ” said the knight.

Carnaby. Master Treen did take off his cap and wipe his forehead. I, for the sake of comforting him in this his

heaviness, placed my hand upon his crown ; and truly I might have taken it for a tuft of bents, the hair on end, the skin immovable as God's earth ! . . .

Sir Thomas, hearing these words, lifted up his hands above his own head, and in the loudest voice he had yet uttered did he cry,

“Wonderful are thy ways in Israel, O Lord ! ”

So saying, the pious knight did strike his knee with the palm of his right hand ; and then gave he a sign, bowing his head and closing his eyes, by which Master Carnaby did think he signified his pleasure that he should go on depositing. And he went on thus :

Carnaby. At this moment one of the accomplices cried, “Willy ! Willy ! prithee stop ! enough in all conscience ! First thou divertedst us from our undertaking with thy strange vagaries, thy Italian girls' nursery sigh, thy Pucks and pinchings, and thy Windsor whimsies. No kitten upon a bed of marum ever played such antics. It was summer and winter, night and day with us within the hour ; and in such religion did we think and feel it, we would have broken the man's jaw who gainsaid it. We have slept with thee under the oaks in the ancient forest of Arden, and we have wakened from our sleep in the tempest far at sea.* Now art thou for frightening us again out of all the senses thou hadst given us, with witches and women more murderous than they.”

Then followed a deeper voice : “Stouter men and more resolute are few ; but thou, my lad, hast words too weighty for flesh and bones to bear up against. And who knows but these creatures may pop amongst us at last, as the wolf did, sure enough, upon him, the noisy rogue, who so long had been crying *wolf !* and *wolf !* ”

Sir Thomas. Well spoken, for two thieves ; albeit I miss the meaning of the most part. Did they prevail with the scapegrace and stop him ?

Carnaby. The last who had spoken did slap him on the shoulder, saying, “Jump into the punt, lad, and across.”

* By this deposition it would appear that Shakspeare had formed the idea, if not the outline, of several plays already, much as he altered them, no doubt, in after life.

'Thereupon did Will Shakspeare jump into said punt, and begin to sing a song about a mermaid.

Shakspeare. Sir! is this credible? I will be sworn I never saw one; and verily do believe that scarcely one in a hundred years doth venture so far up the Avon.

Sir Thomas. There is something in this. Thou mayest have sung about one, nevertheless. Young poets take great liberties with all female kind; not that mermaids are such very unlawful game for them, and there be songs even about worse and staler fish. Mind ye that! Thou hast written songs, and hast sung them, and lewd enough they be, God wot!

Shakspeare. Pardon me, your worship! they were not mine then. Peradventure the song about the mermaid may have been that ancient one which every boy in most parishes has been singing for many years, and, perhaps, his father before him; and somebody was singing it then, mayhap, to keep up his courage in the night.

Sir Thomas. I never heard it.

Shakspeare. Nobody would dare to sing in the presence of your worship, unless commanded; not even the mermaid herself.

Sir Thomas. Canst thou sing it?

Shakspeare. Verily, I can sing nothing.

Sir Thomas. Canst thou repeat it from memory?

Shakspeare. It is so long since I have thought about it, that I may fail in the attempt.

Sir Thomas. Try, however.

Shakspeare.

"The mermaid sat upon the rocks
All day long,
Admiring her beauty and combing her locks,
And singing a mermaid song."

Sir Thomas. What was it? what was it? I thought as much. There thou standest, like a woodpecker, chattering and chattering, breaking the bark with thy beak, and leaving the grub where it was. This is enough to put a saint out of patience.

Shakspeare. The wishes of your worship possess a mysterious influence : I now remember all.

“ And hear the mermaid’s song you may,
As sure as sure can be,
If you will but follow the sun all day,
And souse with him into the sea.”

Sir Thomas. It must be an idle fellow who would take that trouble ; besides, unless he nicked the time he might miss the monster. There be many who are slow to believe that the mermaid singeth.

Shakspeare. Ah, sir ! not only the mermaid singeth, but the merman sweareth, as another old song will convince you.

Sir Thomas. I would fain be convinced of God’s wonders in the great deeps, and would lean upon the weakest reed like unto thee to manifest his glory. Thou mayest convince me.

Shakspeare.

A wonderful story, my lasses and lads,
Peradventure you’ve heard from your grannams or dads,
Of a merman that came every night to woo
The spinster of spinsters, our Catherine Crewe.

But Catherine Crewe
Is now seventy-two,
And avers she hath half forgotten
The truth of the tale, when you ask her about it,
And says, as if fain to deny it or flout it,
“ Pooh ! the merman is dead and rotten.”

The merman came up as the mermen are wont,
To the top of the water, and then swam upon’t ;
And Catherine saw him with both her two eyes,
A lusty young merman full six feet in size.

And Catherine was frighten’d,
Her scalp-skin it tighten’d,
And her head it swam strangely, although on dry land ;
And the merman made bold
Eftsoons to lay hold
(*This* Catherine well recollects) of her hand.

But how could a merman, if ever so good,
Or if ever so clever, be well understood
By a simple young creature of our flesh and blood ?

Some tell us the merman
 Can only speak German,
 In a voice between grunting and snoring ;
 But Catherine says he had learned in the wars
 The language, persuasions, and oaths of our tars,
 And that even his voice was not foreign.

Yet when she was asked how he managed to hide
 The green fishy tail, coming out of the tide
 For night after night above twenty,
 " You troublesome creatures ! " old Catherine replied,
 " *In his pocket* ; won't that now content ye ? "

Sir Thomas. I have my doubts yet. I should have said unto her, seriously, " Kate ! Kate ! I am not convinced." There may be witchcraft or sortilege in it. I would have made it a star-chamber matter.

Shakspeare. It was one, sir.

Sir Thomas. And now I am reminded by this silly, childish song, which, after all, is not the true mermaid's, thou didst tell me, Silas, that the papers found in the lad's pocket were intended for poetry.

Sir Silas. I wish he had missed his aim, sir, in your park, as he hath missed it in his poetry. The papers are not worth reading ; they do not go against him in the point at issue.

Sir Thomas. We must see that ; they being taken upon his person when apprehended.

Sir Silas. Let Ephraim read them, then ; it behoveth not me, a Master of Arts, to con a whelp's whining.

Sir Thomas. Do thou read them aloud unto us, good Master Ephraim. . . .

. . . Whereupon I took the papers which young Willy had not bestowed much pains on ; and they posed and puzzled me grievously, for they were blotted and scrawled in many places, as if somebody had put him out. These likewise I thought fit, after long consideration, to write better, and preserve, great as the loss of time is when men of business take in hand such unseemly matters. However, they are decenter than most, and not without their moral ; for example :

TO THE OWLET.

Who, O thou sapient, saintly bird !
 Thy shouted warnings ever heard
 Unbleached by fear ?
 The blue-faced blubbering imp, who steals
 Yon turnips, thinks thee at his heels,
 Afar or near.

The brawnier churl, who brags at times
 To front and top the rankest crimes,—
 To paunch a deer,
 Quarter a priest, or squeeze a wench,—
 Scuds from thee, clammy as a tench,
 He knows not where.

For this the righteous Lord of all
 Consigns to thee the castle-wall,
 When, many a year,
 Closed in the chancel-vaults, are eyes
 Rainy or sunny at the sighs
 Of knight or peer.

Sir Thomas, when I had ended, said unto me,
 "No harm herein : but are they over?"

I replied, "Yea, sir ! "

"I miss the *posy*," quoth he ; "there is usually a lump of sugar, or a smack thereof at the bottom of the glass. They who are inexperienced in poetry do write it as boys do their copies in the copy-book, without a flourish at the *finis*. It is only the master who can do this befittingly."

I bowed unto his worship reverentially, thinking of a surety he meant me, and returned my best thanks in *set* language. But his worship rebuffed them, and told me graciously that he had an eye on another of very different quality ; that the plain sense of his discourse might do for me, the subtler was certainly for himself. He added that in his younger days he had heard from a person of great parts, and had since profited by it, that ordinary poets are like adders ; the tail blunt and the body rough, and the whole reptile cold-blooded and sluggish : 'whereas we,' he subjoined, 'leap and carbole and curvet, and are as warm as velvet, and as sleek as satin, and as perfumed as a

Naples fan, in every part of us ; and the end of our poems is as pointed as a perch's back-fin, and it requires as much nicety to pick it up as a needle* at nine groats the hundred.'

Then turning toward the culprit, he said mildly unto him,—

“ Now why canst thou not apply thyself unto study ? Why canst thou not ask advice of thy superiors in rank and wisdom ? In a few years, under good discipline, thou mightest rise from the owlet unto the peacock. I know not what pleasant things might not come into the youthful head thereupon.

“ He was the bird of Venus,† goddess of beauty. He flew down (I speak as a poet, and not in my quality of knight and Christian) with half the stars of heaven upon his tail ; and his long, blue neck doth verily appear a dainty slice out of the solid sky.”

Sir Silas smote me with his elbow, and said in my ear,

“ He wanteth not this stuffing ; he beats a pheasant out of the kitchen, to my mind, take him only at the pheasant's size, and don't (upon your life) overdo him.

“ Never be cast down in spirit, nor take it too grievously to heart, if the colour be a suspicion of the pinkish : no sign of rawness in that ; none whatever. It is as becoming to him as to the salmon ; it is as natural to your pea-chick in his best cookery, as it is to the finest October morning, moist underfoot, when partridge's and puss's and reynard's scent lies sweetly.”

Willy Shakspeare, in the mean time lifted up his hands above his ears half a cubit, and taking breath again, said, audibly, although he willed it to be said unto himself alone,

“ O that knights could deign to be our teachers ! Methinks I should briefly spring up into heaven, through the very chink out of which the peacock took his neck.”

Master Silas, who like myself and the worshipful knight, did overhear him, said angrily,

* The greater part of the value of the present work arises from the certain information it affords us on the price of small needles in the reign of Elizabeth. Fine needles in her days were made only at Liège, and some few cities in the Netherlands, and may be reckoned among those things which were much dearer than they are now.

† Mr Tooke had not yet published his *Pantheon*.

"To spring up into heaven, my lad, it would be as well to have at least one foot upon the ground to make the spring withal. I doubt whether we shall leave thee this vantage."

"Nay, nay ! thou art hard upon him, Silas," said the knight.

I was turning over the other papers taken from the pocket of the culprit on his apprehension, and had fixed my eyes on one, when Sir Thomas caught them thus occupied, and exclaimed,

"Mercy upon us ! have we more ?"

"Your patience, worshipful sir ! " said I ; "must I forward ?"

"Yea, yea," quoth he, resignedly, "we must go through ; we are pilgrims in this life."

Then did I read, in a clear voice, the contents of paper the second, being as followeth :

THE MAID'S LAMENT.

I loved him not ; and yet now he is gone

I feel I am alone.

I check'd him while he spoke ; yet could he speak

Alas ! I would not check.

For reasons not to love him once I sought,

And wearied all my thought

To vex myself and him : I now would give

My love could he but live

Who lately lived for me, and when he found

'Twas vain, in holy ground

He hid his face amid the shades of death.

I waste for him my breath

Who wasted his for me : but mine returns,

And this lorn bosom burns

With stifling heat, heaving it up in sleep,

And waking me to weep

Tears that had melted his soft heart : for years

Wept he as bitter tears.

Merciful God ! such was his latest prayer,

These may she never share !

Quieter is his breath, his breast more cold,

Than daisies in the mould,

Where children spell, athwart the churchyard gate,

His name and life's brief date.

Pray for him, gentle souls, whoe'er you be,

And, oh ! pray too for me !

Sir Thomas had fallen into a most comfortable and refreshing slumber ere this lecture was concluded ; but the pause broke it, as there be many who experience after the evening service in our parish-church. Howbeit, he had presently all his wits about him, and remembered well that he had been carefully counting the syllables, about the time when I had pierced as far as into the middle.

“ Young man,” said he to Willy, “ thou givest short measure in every other sack of the load. Thy uppermost stake is of right length ; the undermost falleth off, methinks.

“ Master Ephraim, canst thou count syllables ? I mean no offence. I may have counted wrongfully myself, not being born nor educated for an accountant.”

At such order I did count ; and truly the suspicion was as just as if he had neither been a knight nor a sleeper.

“ Sad stuff ! sad stuff ; indeed ! ” said Master Silas, “ and smelling of popery and wax-candles.”

“ Ay ? ” said Sir Thomas, “ I must sift that.”

“ If praying for the dead is not popery,” said Master Silas, “ I know not what the devil is. Let them pray for us ; they may know whether it will do us any good. We need not pray for them ; we cannot tell whether it will do them any. I call this sound divinity.”

“ Are our churchmen all agreed thereupon ? ” asked Sir Thomas.

“ The wisest are,” replied Master Silas.

“ There are some lank rascals who will never agree upon anything but upon doubting. I would not give ninepence for the best gown upon the most thrifty of ‘em ; and their fingers are as stiff and hard with their pedlary, knavish writing, as any bishop’s are with chalk-stones won honestly from the gout.”

Sir Thomas took the paper up from the table on which I had laid it, and said after a while,

“ The man may only have swooned. I scorn to play the critic, or to ask any one the meaning of a word ; but, sirrah ! ”

Here he turned in his chair from the side of Master Silas, and said unto Willy,—

“ William Shakspeare ! out of this thraldom in regard to popery, I hope, by God’s blessing, to deliver thee. If ever thou repeatest the said verses, knowing the man to be to all intents and purposes a dead man, prythee read the censurable line as thus corrected,

Pray for our Virgin Queen, gentle ! whoe’er you be,

although it is not quite the thing that another should impinge so closely on her skirts.

“ By this improvement, of me suggested, thou mayest make some amends—a syllable or two—for the many that are weighed in the balance and are found wanting.”

Then turning unto me, as being conversant by my profession in such matters, and the same being not very worthy of learned and staid clerks the like of Master Silas, he said,

“ Of all the youths that did ever write in verse, this one verily is he who hath the fewest flowers and devices. But it would be loss of time to form a border, in the fashion of a kingly crown, or a dragon, or a Turk on horseback, out of buttercups and dandelions.

“ Master Ephraim ! look at these badgers ! with a long leg on one quarter and a short leg on the other. The wench herself might well and truly have said all that matter without the poet, bating the rhymes and metre. Among the girls in the country there are many such *shilly-shallys*, who give themselves sore eyes and sharp eye-water ; I would cure them rod in hand.”

Whereupon did William Shakspeare say, with great humility, “ So would I, may it please your worship, an they would let me.”

“ Incorrigible sluts ! Out upon ’em ! and thou art no better than they are,” quoth the knight.

Master Silas cried aloud, “ No better, marry ! they at the worst are but carted and whipped for the edification of the market-folks.* Not a squire or parson in the country round but comes in his best to see a man hanged.”

“ The edification then is higher by a deal,” said William, very composedly.

* This was really the case within our memory.

“Troth ! is it,” replied Master Silas. “The most poisonous reptile has the richest jewel in his head ; thou shalt share the richest gift bestowed upon royalty, and shalt cure the king’s evil.” *

“It is more tractable, then, than the church’s,” quoth William ; and, turning his face toward the chair, he made an obeisance to Sir Thomas, saying,

“Sir ! the more submissive my behaviour is, the more vehement and boisterous is Master Silas. My gentlest words serve only to carry him toward the contrary quarter, as the south wind bloweth a ship northward.”

“Youth,” said Sir Thomas, smiling most benignly, “I find, and well indeed might I have surmised, thy utter ignorance of winds, equinoxes, and tides. Consider now a little ! With what propriety can a wind be called a south wind if it bloweth a vessel to the north ? Would it be a south wind that blew it from this hall into Warwick market-place ?”

“It would be a strong one,” said Master Silas unto me, pointing his remark, as witty men are wont, with the elbow-pan.

But Sir Thomas, who waited for an answer, and received none, continued,—

“Would a man be called a good man who tended and pushed on toward evil ?”

Shakspeare. I stand corrected. I could sail to Cathay or Tartary † with half the nautical knowledge I have acquired in this glorious hall.

The devil impelling a mortal to wrong courses, is thereby known to be the devil. He, on the contrary, who exciteth to good is no devil, but an angel of light, or under the guidance of one. The devil driveth unto his own home ; so doth the south wind, so doth the north wind.

Alas ! alas ! we possess not the mastery over our own weak minds when a higher spirit standeth nigh and draweth us within his influence.

* It was formerly thought, and perhaps is thought still, that the hand of a man recently hanged, being rubbed on the tumour of the king’s evil, was able to cure it. The crown and the gallows divided the glory of the sovereign remedy.

† And yet he never did sail any farther than into Bohemia.

Sir Thomas. Those thy words are well enough; very well, very good, wise, discreet, judicious beyond thy years. But then that *sailing* comes in an awkward, ugly way across me; that *Cathay*, that *Tartarus*!

Have a care! Do thou nothing rashly. Mind! an thou stealest my punt for the purpose, I send the constable after thee or e'er thou art half way over.

Shakspeare. He would make a stock-fish of me an he caught me. It is hard sailing out of his straits, although they be carefully laid down in most parishes, and may have taken them from actual survey.

Sir Silas. Sir, we have bestowed on him already well-nigh a good hour of our time. . . .

Sir Thomas, who was always fond of giving admonition and reproof to the ignorant and erring, and who had found the seeds (little mustard-seeds, 'tis true, and never likely to arise into the great mustard-tree of the Gospel) in the poor lad Willy, did let his heart soften a whit tenderer and kindlier than Master Silas did, and said unto Master Silas,

“A good hour of our time! Yea, Silas! and thou wouldest give *him* eternity!”

“What, sir! would you let him go?” said Master Silas. “Presently we shall have neither deer nor dog, neither hare nor coney, neither swan nor heron; every carp from pool, every bream from brook, will be groped for. The marble monuments in the church will no longer protect the leaden coffins; and if there be any ring of gold on the finger of knight or dame, it will be torn away with as little ruth and ceremony as the ring from a butchered sow's snout.”

“Awful words! Master Silas,” quoth the knight, musing; “but thou mistekest my intentions. I let him not go; howbeit, at worst I would only mark him in the ear, and turn him up again after this warning, peradventure with a few stripes to boot athwart the shoulders, in order to make them shrug a little, and shake off the burden of idleness.”

Now I, having seen, I dare not say the innocence, but the innocent and simple manner of Willy, and pitying his tender years, and having an inkling that he was a lad, poor Willy! whom God had endowed with some parts, and into whose

breast he had instilled that milk of loving-kindness by which alone we can be like unto those little children of whom is the household and kingdom of our Lord, I was moved, yea, even unto tears. And now, to bring gentler thoughts into the hearts of Master Silas and Sir Thomas, who, in his wisdom, deemed it a light punishment to slit an ear or two, or inflict a wiry scourging, I did remind his worship that another paper was yet unread, at least to them, although I had been perusing it.

This was much pleasanter than the two former, and overflowing with the praises of the worthy knight and his gracious lady ; and having an echo to it in another voice, I did hope thereby to disarm their just wrath and indignation. It was thus couched.

FIRST SHEPHERD.

Jesu ! what lofty elms are here !
Let me look through them at the clear,
Deep sky above, and bless my star
That such a worthy knight's they are !

SECOND SHEPHERD.

Innocent creatures ! how those deer
Trot merrily, and romp and rear !

FIRST SHEPHERD.

The glorious knight who walks beside
His most majestic lady bride,

SECOND SHEPHERD.

Under these branches spreading wide,

FIRST SHEPHERD.

Carries about so many cares
Touching his ancestors and heirs,
That came from Athens and from Rome—

SECOND SHEPHERD.

As many of them as are come—

FIRST SHEPHERD.

Nought else the smallest lodge can find
In the vast manors of his mind ;
Envying not Solomon his wit—

SECOND SHEPHERD.

No, nor his women not a bit ;
 Being well-built and well-behavèd
 As Solomon, I trow, or David.

FIRST SHEPHERD.

And taking by his jewell'd hand
 The jewel of that lady bland,
 He sees the tossing antlers pass
 And throw quaint shadows o'er the grass ;
 While she alike the hour beguiles,
 And looks at him and them, and smiles.

SECOND SHEPHERD.

With conscience proof 'gainst Satan's shock,
 Albeit finer than her smock.*
 Marry ! her smiles are not of vanity,
 But resting on sound Christianity.
 Faith, you would swear, had nail'd † her ears on
 The book and cushion of the parson."

" Methinks the rhyme at the latter end might be bettered," said Sir Thomas. " The remainder is indited not unaptly. But, young man, never having obtained the permission of my honourable dame to praise her in guise of poetry, I cannot see all the merit I would fain discern in the verses. She ought first to have been sounded ; and it being certified that she disapproved not her glorification, then might it be trumpeted forth into the world below."

" Most worshipful knight," replied the youngster, " I never could take it in hand to sound a dame of quality,—they are all of them too deep and too practised for me, and have better and abler men about 'em. And surely I did imagine to myself that if it were asked of any honourable man (omitting to speak of ladies) whether he would give permission to be openly praised, he would reject the application as a gross

* *Smock*, formerly a part of the female dress, corresponding with *shroud*, or what we now call (or lately called) *shirt* of the man's. Fox, speaking of Latimer's burning, says, " Being slipped into his *shroud*."

† Faith nailing the ears is a strong and sacred metaphor. The rhyme is imperfect : Shakspeare was not always attentive to these minor beauties.

offence. It appeareth to me that even to praise one's self, although it be shameful, is less shameful than to throw a burning coal into the incense-box that another doth hold to waft before us, and then to snift and simper over it, with maidenly, wishful coyness, as if forsooth one had no hand in setting it asmoke."

Then did Sir Thomas, in his zeal to instruct the ignorant, and so make the lowly hold up their heads, say unto him,

" Nay, but all the great do thus. Thou must not praise them without leave and license. Praise unpermitted is plebeian praise. It is presumption to suppose that thou knowest enough of the noble and the great to discover their high qualities. They alone could manifest them unto thee. It requireth much discernment and much time to enucleate and bring into light their abstruse wisdom and gravely featured virtues. Those of ordinary men lie before thee in thy daily walks; thou mayest know them by converse at their tables, as thou knowest the little tame squirrel that chippeth his nuts in the open sunshine of a bowling-green. But beware how thou enterest the awful arbours of the great, who conceal their magnanimity in the depths of their hearts, as lions do."

He then paused; and observing the youth in deep and earnest meditation over the fruits of his experience, as one who tasted and who would fain digest them, he gave him encouragement, and relieved the weight of his musings by kind interrogation:

" So, then, these verses are thine own?"

The youth answered,—

" Sir, I must confess my fault."

" And who was the shepherd written here *Second Shepherd*, that had the ill manners to interrupt thee? Methinks, in helping thee to mount the saddle, he pretty nigh tossed thee over,*⁹ with his jerks and quirks."

* Shakespeare seems to have profited afterward by this metaphor, even more perhaps than by all the direct pieces of instruction in poetry given him so handsomely by the worthy knight. And here it may be permitted the editor to profit also by the manuscript, correcting in Shakespeare what is absolute nonsense as now printed:—

" *Vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself.*"

Without waiting for any answer, his worship continued his interrogations :

“ But do you woolstaplers call yourselves by the style and title of shepherds ? ”

“ Verily, sir, do we ; and I trust by right. The last owner of any place is called the master more properly than the dead and gone who once held it. If that be true (and who doubts it ?) we, who have the last of the sheep, namely, the wool and skin, and who buy all of all the flock, surely may more properly be called shepherds than those idle vagrants who tend them only for a season, selling a score or purchasing a score, as may happen.”

Here Sir Thomas did pause a while, and then said unto Master Silas,

“ My own cogitations, and not this stripling, have induced me to consider and to conclude a weighty matter for knightly scholarship. I never could rightly understand before how Colin Clout, and sundry others calling themselves shepherds, should argue like doctors in law, physic, and divinity.

“ Silas ! they were woolstaplers ; and they must have exercised their wits in dealing with tithe-proctors and parsons, and moreover with fellows of colleges from our two learned universities, who have sundry lands held under them, as thou knowest, and take the small tithes in kind. Colin Clout, methinks, from his extensive learning, might have acquired enough interest with the Queen’s Highness to change his name for the better, and, furthermore, her royal license to carry armorial bearings, in no peril of taint from so unsavoury an appellation.”

Master Silas did interrupt this discourse, by saying,

“ May it please your worship, the constable is waiting.”

Whereat Sir Thomas said, tartly,

It should be its *sell*. *Sell* is *saddle* in Spenser and elsewhere, from the Latin and Italian.

[⁹ Second ed. added : “ and falls on the *other side*.” Other side of what ? It should be. In 1st ed. the note reads : “ and Italian. This emendation was shewn to the late Mr Hazlitt, an acute man at least, who expressed his conviction that it was the right reading, and added somewhat more in approbation of it.”]

“ And let him wait.” *

Then to me,

“ I hope we have done with verses, and are not to be befooled by the lad’s nonsense touching mermaids or worse creatures.”

Then to Will,

“ William Shakspeare ! we live in a Christian land, a land of great toleration and forbearance. Three-score cartsful of fagots a year are fully sufficient to clear our English air from every pestilence of heresy and witchcraft. It hath not always been so, God wot ! Innocent and guilty took their turns before the fire, like geese and capons. The spit was never cold ; the cook’s sleeve was ever above the elbow. Countrymen came down from distant villages into towns and cities, to see perverters whom they had never heard of, and to learn the righteousness of hatred. When heretics waxed fewer the religious began to grumble that God, in losing his enemies, had also lost his avengers.

“ Do not thou, William Shakspeare, dig the hole for thy own stake. If thou canst not make men wise, do not make them merry at thy cost. We are not to be paganised any more. Having struck from our calendars, and unnailed from our chapels, many dozens of decent saints, with as little compunction and remorse as unlucky lads throw frog-spawn and tadpoles out of stagnant ditches, never let us think of bringing back among us the daintier divinities they ousted. All these are the devil’s imps, beautiful as they appear in what we falsely call works of genius, which really and truly are the devil’s own ; statues more graceful than humanity, pictures more living than life, eloquence that raised single cities above empires, poor men above kings. If these are not Satan’s works, where are they ? I will tell thee where they are like-

* It has been suggested that this answer was borrowed from Virgil, and goes strongly against the genuineness of the manuscript. The Editor’s memory was upon the stretch to recollect the words ; the learned critic supplied them :—

“ Solum *Æ*neas vocat : *et vocet, oro.*”

The Editor could only reply, indeed weakly, that *calling* and *waiting* are not exactly the same, unless when tradesmen rap and gentlemen are leaving town.

wise. In holding vain converse with false gods. The utmost we can allow in propriety is to call a knight Phoebus, and a dame Diana. They are not meat for every trencher.

“We must now proceed straightforward with the business on which thou comest before us. What further sayest thou, witness?”

Treen. His face was toward me; I saw it clearly. The graver man followed him into the punt, and said, roughly, “We shall get hanged as sure as thou pipest.”

Whereunto he answered,—

“Naturally, as fall upon the ground
The leaves in winter and the girls in spring.”

And then began he again with the mermaid; whereat the graver man clapped a hand before his mouth, and swore he should take her in wedlock, to have and to hold, if he sang another stave. “And thou shalt be our pretty little bride-maid,” quoth he gaily to the graver man, chucking him under the chin.

Sir Thomas. And what did Carnaby say unto thee, or what didst thou say unto Carnaby?

Treen. Carnaby said unto me, somewhat tauntingly, “The big squat man, that lay upon thy bread-basket like a nightmare, is a punt at last, it seems.”

“Punt, and more too,” answered I. “Tarry awhile, and thou shalt see this punt (so let me call it) lead them into temptation, and swamp them or carry them to the gallows; I would not stay else.”

Sir Thomas. And what didst thou, Joseph Carnaby?

Carnaby. Finding him neither slack nor shy, I readily tarried. We knelt down opposite each other, and said our prayers; and he told me he was now comfortable. “The evil one,” said he, “hath enough to mind yonder: he shall not hurt us.”

Never was a sweeter night, had there been but some mild ale under it, which any one would have sworn it was made for. The milky way looked like a long drift of hail-stones on a sunny ridge.

Sir Thomas. Hast thou done describing?

Carnaby. Yes, an please your worship.

Sir Thomas. God's blessing be upon thee, honest Carnaby ! I feared a moon-fall. In our days nobody can think about a plum-pudding but the moon comes down upon it. I warrant ye this lad here hath as many moons in his poems as the Saracens had in their banners.

Shakspeare. I have not hatched mine yet, sir. Whenever I do I trust it will be worth taking to market.

Carnaby. I said all I know of the stars ; but Master Euseby can run over half a score and upward, here and there. "Am I right, or wrong ?" cried he, spreading on the back of my hand all his fingers, stiff as antlers and cold as icicles. "Look up, Joseph ! Joseph ! there is no Lucifer in the firmament !" I myself did feel queerish and qualmy upon hearing that a star was missing, being no master of gainsaying it ; and I abased my eyes, and entreated of Euseby to do in like manner. And in this posture did we both of us remain ; and the missing star did not disquiet me ; and all the others seemed as if they knew us and would not tell of us ; and there was peace and pleasantness over sky and earth. And I said to my companion,—

"How quiet now, good Master Euseby, are all God's creatures in this meadow, because they never pry into such high matters, but breathe sweetly among the pig-nuts. The only things we hear or see stirring are the glow-worms and dormice, as though they were sent for our edification, teaching us to rest contented with our own little light, and to come out and seek our sustenance where none molest or thwart us."

Shakspeare. Ye would have it thus, no doubt, when your pockets and pouches are full of gins and nooses.

Sir Thomas. A bridle upon thy dragon's tongue ! And do thou, Master Joseph, quit the dormice and glow-worms, and tell us whither did the rogues go.

Carnaby. I wot not after they had crossed the river ; they were soon out of sight and hearing.

Sir Thomas. Went they toward Charlecote ?

Carnaby. Their first steps were thitherward.

Sir Thomas. Did they come back unto the punt ?

Carnaby. They went down the stream in it, and crossed

the Avon some fourscore yards below where we were standing. They came back in it, and moored it to the sedges in which it had stood before.

Sir Thomas. How long were they absent?

Carnaby. Within an hour, or thereabout, all the three men returned. Will Shakspeare and another were sitting in the middle, the third punted.

“Remember now, gentles!” quoth William Shakspeare, “the road we have taken is henceforward a footpath for ever, according to law.”

“How so?” asked the punter, turning toward him.

“Forasmuch as a corpse hath passed along it,” answered he.

Whereupon both Euseby and myself did forthwith fall upon our faces, commanding our souls unto the Lord.

Sir Thomas. It was then really the dead body that quivered so fearfully upon the water, covering all the punt! Christ, deliver us! I hope the keeper they murdered was not Jeremiah. His wife and four children would be very chargeable, and the man was by no means amiss. Proceed! what further?

Carnaby. On reaching the bank, “I never sat pleasanter in my lifetime,” said William Shakspeare, “than upon this carcass.”

Sir Thomas. Lord have mercy upon us! Thou upon a carcass, at thy years? . . .

And the knight drew back his chair half an ell farther from the table, and his lips quivered at the thought of such inhumanity.

“And what said he more? and what did he?” asked the knight.

Carnaby. He patted it smartly, and said, “Lug it out; break it.”

Sir Thomas. These four poor children! who shall feed them?

Sir Silas. Sir! in God’s name have you forgotten that Jeremiah is gone to Nuneaton to see his father, and that the murdered man is the buck?

Sir Thomas. They killed the buck likewise. But what,

ye cowardly varlets ! have ye been deceiving me all this time ? And thou, youngster ! couldst thou say nothing to clear up the case ? Thou shalt smart for it. Methought I had lost by a violent death the best servant ever man had—righteous, if there be no blame in saying it, as the prophet whose name he beareth, and brave as the lion of Judah.

Shakspeare. Sir, if these men could deceive your worship for a moment, they might deceive me for ever. I could not guess what their story aimed at, except my ruin. I am inclined to lean for once toward the opinion of Master Silas, and to believe it was really the stolen buck on which this William (if indeed there is any truth at all in the story) was sitting.

Sir Thomas. What more hast thou for me that is not enigma or parable ?

Carnaby. I did not see the carcass, man's or beast's, may it please your worship, and I have recited and can recite that only which I saw and heard. After the words of lugging out and breaking it, knives were drawn accordingly. It was no time to loiter or linger. We crept back under the shadow of the alders and hazels on the high bank that bordereth Mickle Meadow, and, making straight for the public road, hastened homeward.

Sir Thomas. Hearing this deposition, dost thou affirm the like upon thy oath, Master Euseby Treen, or dost thou vary in aught essential ?

Treen. Upon my oath I do depose and affirm the like, and truly the identical same ; and I will nevermore vary upon aught essential.

Sir Thomas. I do now further demand of thee whether thou knowest anything more appertaining unto this business.

Treen. Ay, verily ; that your worship may never hold me for timorous and superstitious, I do furthermore add that some other than deer-stealers was abroad. In sign whereof, although it was the dryest and clearest night of the season, my jerkin was damp inside and outside when I reached my house-door.

Shakspeare. I warrant thee, Euseby, the damp began not at the outside. A word in thy ear : Lucifer was thy tapster, I trow.

Sir Thomas. Irreverent swine ! hast no awe nor shame.

Thou hast aggravated thy offence, William Shakspeare, by thy foul-mouthedness.

Sir Silas. I must remind your worship that he not only has committed this iniquity afore, but hath pawed the puddle he made, and relapsed into it after due caution and reproof. God forbid that what he spake against me, out of the gall of his proud stomach, should move me. I defy him, a low, ignorant wretch, a rogue and vagabond, a thief and cut-throat, a ——* monger and mutton-eater.

Shakspeare. Your worship doth hear the learned clerk's testimony in my behalf. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings"—

Sir Thomas. Silas, the youth has failings—a madcap; but he is pious.

Shakspeare. Alas, no, sir! Would I were! But Sir Silas, like the prophet, came to curse, and was forced to bless me, even me, a sinner, a mutton-eater!

Sir Thomas. Thou urgedst him. He beareth no ill-will toward thee. Thou knewest, I suspect, that the blackness in his mouth proceeded from a natural cause.

Shakspeare. The Lord is merciful! I was brought hither in jeopardy; I shall return in joy. Whether my innocence be declared or otherwise, my piety and knowledge will be forwarded and increased; for your worship will condescend, even from the judgment-seat, to enlighten the ignorant where a soul shall be saved or lost. And I, even I, may trespass a moment on your courtesy. I quail at the words *natural cause*. Be there any such?

Sir Thomas. Youth! I never thought thee so staid. Thou hast, for these many months, been represented unto me as one dissolute and light, much given unto mummeries and mysteries, wakes and carousals, cudgel-fighters and mountebanks and wanton women. They do also represent of thee (I hope it may be without foundation) that thou enactest the parts, not simply of foresters and fairies, girls in the greensickness and friars, lawyers and outlaws, but likewise, having

* Here the manuscript is blotted; but the probability is that it was *fishmonger*, rather than *ironmonger*, fishmongers having always been notorious cheats and liars.

small reverence for station, of kings and queens, knights and privy-councillors, in all their glory. It hath been whispered, moreover, and the testimony of these two witnesses doth appear in some measure to countenance and confirm it, that thou hast at divers times this last summer been seen and heard alone, inasmuch as human eye may discover, on the narrow slip of greensward between the Avon and the chancel, distorting thy body like one possessed, and uttering strange language, like unto incantation. This, however, cometh not before me. Take heed! take heed unto thy ways; there are graver things in law even than homicide and deer-stealing.

Sir Silas. And strong against him. Folks have been consumed at the stake for pettier felonies and upon weaker evidence.

Sir Thomas. To that anon. . . .

. . . William Shakspeare did hold down his head, answering nought. And Sir Thomas spake again unto him, as one mild and fatherly, if so be that such a word may be spoken of a knight and parliament-man. And these are the words he spake :

“ Reason and ruminate with thyself now. To pass over and pretermitt the danger of representing the actions of the others, and mainly of lawyers and churchmen, the former of whom do pardon no offences, and the latter those only against God, having no warrant for more, canst thou believe it innocent to counterfeit kings and queens? Supposest thou that if the impression of their faces on a farthing be felonious and rope-worthy, the imitation of head and body, voice and bearing, plume and strut, crown and mantle, and everything else that maketh them royal and glorious, be aught less? Perpend, young man, perpend! Consider, who among inferior mortals shall imitate them becomingly? Dreamest thou they talk and act like cheesemen at Banbury fair? How can thy shallow brain suffice for their vast conceptions? How darest thou say, as they do: ‘ Hang this fellow; quarter that; flay; mutilate; stab; shoot; press; hook; torture; burn alive’? These are royalties. Who appointed thee to such office? The Holy Ghost? He alone can confer it; but when wert thou anointed? ”

William was so zealous in storing up these verities, that he looked as though he were unconscious that the pouring-out was over. He started, which he had not done before, at the voice of Master Silas; but soon recovered his complacency, and smiled with much serenity at being called low-minded varlet.

“Low-minded varlet!” cried Master Silas, most contemptuously, “dost thou imagine that king calleth king, like thy chums, *filcher* and *fibber*, *whirligig* and *nincompoop*? Instead of this low vulgarity and sordid idleness, ending in nothing, they throw at one another such fellows as thee by the thousand, and when they have cleared the land, render God thanks and make peace.”

Willy did now sigh out his ignorance of these matters; and he sighed, mayhap, too, at the recollection of the peril he had run into, and had ne'er a word on the nail.*

The bowels of Sir Thomas waxed tenderer and tenderer; and he opened his lips in this fashion :

“Stripling! I would now communicate unto thee, on finding thee docile and assentaneous, the instruction thou needest on the signification of the words *natural cause*, if thy duty toward thy neighbour had been first instilled into thee.”

Whereupon Master Silas did interpose, for the dinner hour was drawing nigh.

“We cannot do all at once,” quoth he. “Coming out of order, it might harm him. Malt before hops, the world over, or the beer muddies.”

But Sir Thomas was not to be pricked out of his form even by so shrewd a pricker; and like unto one who heareth not, he continued to look most graciously on the homely vessel that stood ready to receive his wisdom.

“Thy mind,” said he, “being unprepared for higher cogitations, and the groundwork and religious duty not being well rammer-beaten and flinted, I do pass over this supererogatory point, and inform thee rather, that bucks and swans and herons have something in their very names announcing them of knightly appurtenance; and (God forfend that evil do ensue therefrom!) that a goose on the common, or a game-

* *On the nail* appears to be intended to express *ready payment*.

cock on the loft of a cottager or villager, may be seized, bagged, and abducted, with far less offence to the laws. In a buck there is something so gainly and so grand, he treadeth the earth with such ease and such agility, he abstaineth from all other animals with such punctilious avoidance, one would imagine God created him when he created knighthood. In the swan there is such purity, such coldness is there in the element he inhabiteth, such solitude of station, that verily he doth remind me of the Virgin Queen herself. Of the heron I have less to say, not having him about me; but I never heard his lordly croak without the conceit that it resembled a chancellor's or a primate's.

“ I do perceive, William Shakspeare, thy compunction and contrition.”

Shakspeare. I was thinking, may it please your worship, of the game-cock and the goose, having but small notion of herons. This doctrine of abduction, please your worship, hath been alway inculcated by the soundest of our judges. Would they had spoken on other points with the same clearness. How many unfortunates might thereby have been saved from crossing the Cordilleras! *

Sir Thomas. Ay, ay! they have been fain to fly the country at last, thither or elsewhere. . . .

And then did Sir Thomas call unto him Master Silas, and say,

“ Walk we into the bay-window. And thou mayest come, Ephraim.”

And when we were there together, I, Master Silas, and

* Perhaps a pun was intended; or possibly it might, in the age of Elizabeth, have been a vulgar term for *hanging*, although we find no trace of the expression in other books.¹⁰

[¹⁰ In the 1st ed. this note ran: “The Cordilleras are mountains, we know, running through South America. Perhaps a pun was intended; or possibly it might, in the age of Elizabeth, have been a vulgar term for *hanging*, although we find no trace of the expression in other books. We have no clue to guide us here. It might be suggested that Shakspeare, who shines little in geographical knowledge, fancied the Cordilleras to extend into North America, had convictions in his time been transported to those colonies. Certainly, many adventurers and desperate men went thither.”]

his worship, did his worship say unto the chaplain, but oftener looking toward me,

"I am not ashamed to avouch that it goeth against me to hang this young fellow, richly as the offence in its own nature doth deserve it, he talketh so reasonably; not indeed so reasonably, but so like unto what a reasonable man may listen to and reflect on. There is so much, too, of compassion for others in hard cases, and something so very near in semblance to innocence itself in that airy swing of lightheartedness about him. I cannot fix my eyes (as one would say) on the shifting and sudden *shade-and-shine*, which cometh back to me, do what I will, and mazes me in a manner, and blinks me."

At this juncture I was ready to fall upon the ground before his worship, and clasp his knees for Willy's pardon. But he had so many points about him, that I feared to discompose 'em, and thus make bad worse. Besides which, Master Silas left me but scanty space for good resolutions, crying,

"He may be committed, to save time. Afterward he may be sentenced to death, or he may not."

Sir Thomas. "Twere shame upon me were he not; 'twere indication that I acted unadvisedly in the commitment.

Sir Silas. The penalty of the law may be commuted, if expedient, on application to the fountain of mercy in London.

Sir Thomas. Maybe, Silas, those shall be standing round the fount of mercy who play in idleness and wantonness with its waters, and let them not flow widely, nor take their natural course. Dutiful gallants may encompass it, and it may linger among the flowers they throw into it, and never reached the parched lip on the wayside.

These are homely thoughts, thoughts from a-field, thoughts for the study and housekeeper's room. But whenever I have given utterance unto them, as my heart hath often prompted me with beatings at the breast, my hearers seemed to bear toward me more true and kindly affection than my richest fancies and choicest phraseologies could purchase.

"Twere convenient to bethink thee, should any other great man's park have been robbed this season, no judge upon the bench will back my recommendation for mercy. And, indeed, how could I expect it? Things may soon be brought

to such a pass that their lordships shall scarcely find three haunches each upon the circuit. . . .

“Well, Sir!” quoth Master Silas, “you have a right to go on in your own way. Make him only give up the girl.”

Here Sir Thomas reddened with righteous indignation, and answered,—

“I cannot think it! such a stripling! poor, penniless; it must be some one else.”

And now Master Silas did redder in his turn, redder than Sir Thomas, and first asked me,—

“What the devil do you stare at?”

And then asked his worship,

“Who should it be if not the rogue?” and his lips turned as blue as a blue-bell.

Then Sir Thomas left the window, and again took his chair, and having stood so long on his legs, groaned upon it to ease him. His worship scowled with all his might, and looked exceedingly wroth and vengeful at the culprit, and said unto him,

“Harkye, knave! I have been conferring with my learned clerk and chaplain in what manner I may, with the least severity, rid the county (which thou disgracest) of thee.”

William Shakspeare raised up his eyes, modestly and fearfully, and said slowly these few words, which, had they been a better and nobler man’s, would deserve to be written in letters of gold. I, not having that art nor substance, do therefore write them in my largest and roundest character, and do leave space about ’em, according to their rank and dignity:

“Worshipful sir!

“A WORD IN THE EAR IS OFTEN AS GOOD AS A HALTER UNDER IT, AND SAVES THE GROAT.”

“Thou discourses well,” said Sir Thomas, “but others can discourse well likewise. Thou shalt avoid; I am resolute.”

Shakspeare. I supplicate your honour to impart unto me, in your wisdom, the mode and means whereby I may surcease to be disgraceful to the county.

Sir Thomas. I am not bloody-minded.

First, thou shalt have the fairest and fullest examination. Much hath been deposed against thee ; something may come forth for thy advantage. I will not thy death ; thou shalt not die.

The laws have loopholes, like castles, both to shoot from and to let folks down.

Sir Silas. That pointed ear would look the better for paring, and that high forehead can hold many letters.

Whereupon did William, poor lad ! turn deadly pale, but spake not.

Sir Thomas then abated a whit of his severity, and said, staidly,

“ Testimony doth appear plain and positive against thee ; nevertheless am I minded and prompted to aid thee myself, in disclosing and unfolding what thou couldst not of thine own wits, in furtherance of thine own defence.

“ One witness is persuaded and assured of the evil spirit having been abroad, and the punt appeared unto him diversely from what it appeared unto the other.”

Shakspeare. If the evil spirit produced one appearance, he might have produced all, with deference to the graver judgment of your worship.

If what seemed *punt* was *devil*, what seemed *buck* might have been *devil* too ; nay, more easily, the horns being forthcoming.

Thieves and reprobates do resemble him more nearly still ; and it would be hard if he could not make free with their bodies, when he has their souls already.

Sir Thomas. But, then, those voices ! and thou thyself, Will Shakspeare !

Shakspeare. O might I kiss the hand of my deliverer, whose clear-sightedness throweth such manifest and plenary light upon my innocence !

Sir Thomas. How so ? What light, in God’s name, have I thrown upon it as yet ?

Shakspeare. Oh ! those voices ! those faeries and spirits ! whence came they ? None can deal with ’em but the devil, the parson, and witches. And does not the devil oftentimes

take the very form, features, and habiliments of knights, and bishops, and other good men, to lead them into temptation and destroy them? or to injure their good name, in failure of seduction?

He is sure of the wicked; he lets them go their ways out of hand.

I think your worship once delivered some such observation, in more courtly guise, which I would not presume to ape. If it was not your worship, it was our glorious lady the queen, or the wise Master Walsingham, or the great Lord Cecil. I may have marred and broken it, as sluts do a pancake, in the turning.

Sir Thomas. Why! ay, indeed, I had occasion once to remark as much.

Shakspeare. So have I heard in many places; although I was not present when Matthew Atterend fought about it for the honour of Kineton hundred.

Sir Thomas. Fought about it!

Shakspeare. As your honour recollects. Not but on other occasions he would have fought no less bravely for the queen.

Sir Thomas. We must get thee through, were it only for thy memory; the most precious gift among the mental powers that Providence hath bestowed upon us. I had half forgotten the thing myself. Thou mayest, in time, take thy satchel for London, and aid good old Master Holingshed.

We must clear thee, Will! I am slow to surmise that there is blood upon thy hands!

... His worship's choler had all gone down again; and he sat as cool and comfortable as a man sitteth to be shaved. Then called he on Euseby Treen, and said,

“Euseby Treen! tell us whether thou observedst anything unnoticed or unsaid by the last witness.”

Treen. One thing only, sir!

When they had passed the water an owlet hooted after them; and methought, if they had any fear of God before their eyes they would have turned back, he cried so lustily.

Shakspeare. Sir, I cannot forbear to take the owlet out of your mouth. He knocks them all on the head like so many mice. Likely story! One fellow hears him cry lustily, the other doth not hear him at all!

Carnaby. Not hear him ! A body might have heard him at Barford or Sherbourne.

Sir Thomas. Why didst not name him ? Canst not answer me ?

Carnaby. He doubted whether punt were punt ; I doubted whether owlet were owlet, after Lucifer was away from the roll-call.

We say, *Speak the truth and shame the devil* ; but shaming him is one thing, your honour, and facing him another ! I have heard owlets, but never owlet like him.

Shakspeare. The Lord be praised ! All, at last, a-running to my rescue.

Owlet, indeed ! Your worship may have remembered in an ancient book indeed, what book is so ancient that your worship doth not remember it ? a book printed by Doctor Faustus.

Sir Thomas. Before he dealt with the devil ?

Shakspeare. Not long before ; it being the very book that made the devil think it worth his while to deal with him.

Sir Thomas. What chapter thereof wouldest thou recall unto my recollection ?

Shakspeare. That concerning owls, with the grim print afore it.

Doctor Faustus, the wise doctor, who knew other than owls and owlets, knew the tempter in that form. Faustus was not your man for fancies and figments ; and he tells us that, to his certain knowledge, it was verily an owl's face that whispered so much mischief in the ear of our first parent.

One plainly sees it, quoth Doctor Faustus, under that gravity which in human life we call dignity, but of which we read nothing in the Gospel. We despise the hangman, we detest the hanged ; and yet, saith Duns Scotus, could we turn aside the heavy curtain, or stand high enough a-tiltœ to peep through its chinks and crevices, we should perhaps find these two characters to stand justly among the most innocent in the drama. He who blinketh the eyes of the poor wretch about to die doeth it out of mercy ; those who preceded him, bidding him in the garb of justice to shed the blood of his fellow-man, had less or none. So they hedge well their own

grounds, what care they? For this do they catch at stakes and thorns, at quick and rotten—

. . . Here Master Silas interrupted the discourse of the devil's own doctor, delivered and printed by him before he was the devil's, to which his worship had listened very attentively and delightedly. But Master Silas could keep his temper no longer, and cried, fiercely, “Seditious sermonizer! hold thy peace, or thou shalt answer for 't before convocation.

Sir Thomas. Silas! thou dost not approve, then, the doctrine of this Doctor Duns?

Sir Silas. Heretical Rabbi!

Shakspeare. If two of a trade can never agree, yet surely two of a name may.

Sir Silas. Who dares call me heretical? who dares call me rabbi? who dares call me Scotus? Spider! spider! yea, thou hast one corner left; I espy thee, and my broom shall reach thee yet.

Shakspeare. I perceive that Master Silas doth verily believe I have been guilty of suborning the witnesses, at least the last, the best man (if any difference) of the two. No, sir, no. If my family and friends have united their wits and money for this purpose, be the crime of perverted justice on their heads! They injure whom they intended to serve. Improvident men! (if the young may speak thus of the elderly) could they imagine to themselves that your worship was to be hoodwinked and led astray?

Sir Thomas. No man shall ever dare to hoodwink me, to lead me astray, no, nor lead me anywise. Powerful defence! Heyday! Sit quiet, Master Treen! Euseby Treen! dost hear me? Clench thy fist again, sirrah! and I clap thee in the stocks.

Joseph Carnaby! do not scratch thy breast nor thy pate before me.

. . . Now Joseph had not only done that in his wrath, but had unbuckled his leathern garter, fit instrument for strife and blood, and peradventure would have smitten, had not the knight, with magisterial authority, interposed.

His worship said unto him, gravely,—“Joseph Carnaby! Joseph Carnaby! hast thou never read the words ‘Put up thy sword’? ”

“ Subornation ! your worship ! ” cried Master Joe. “ The fellow hath ne’er a shilling in leather or till, and many must go to suborn one like me.”

“ I do believe it of thee,” said Sir Thomas ; “ but patience, man ! patience ! he rather tended toward exculpating thee. Ye have far to walk for dinner ; ye may depart.”

They went accordingly.

Then did Sir Thomas say, “ These are hot men, Silas ! ”

And Master Silas did reply unto him,—

“ These are brands that would set fire to the bulrushes in the mill-pool. I know these twain for quiet folks, having coursed with them over Wincott.”

Sir Thomas then said unto William, “ It behoveth thee to stand clear of yon Joseph, unless when thou mayest call to thy aid the Matthew Atterend thou speakest of. He did then fight valiantly, eh ? ”

Shakspeare. His cause fought valiantly ; his fist but seconded it. He won ; proving the golden words to be no property of our lady’s, although her Highness hath never disclaimed them.

Sir Thomas. What art thou saying ?

Shakspeare. So I heard from a preacher at Oxford, who had preached at Easter in the chapel-royal of Westminster.

Sir Thomas. Thou ! why, how could that happen ? Oxford ! chapel-royal !

Shakspeare. And to whom I said (your worship will forgive my forwardness), “ I have the honour, sir, to live within two measured miles of the very Sir Thomas Lucy who spake that.” And I vow I said it without any hope or belief that he would invite me, as he did, to dine with him thereupon.

Sir Thomas. There be nigh upon three miles betwixt this house and Stratford bridge-end.

Shakspeare. I dropt a mile in my pride and exultation, God forgive me ! I would not conceal my fault.

Sir Thomas. Wonderful ! that a preacher so learned as to preach before majesty in the chapel-royal should not have caught thee tripping over a whole lawful mile,—a good third of the distance between my house and the cross-roads. This is incomprehensible in a scholar.

Shakspeare. God willed that he should become my teacher, and in the bowels of his mercy hid my shame.*

Sir Thomas. How camest thou into the converse of such eminent and ghostly men?

Shakspeare. How, indeed? everything against me!

. . . He sighed, and entered into a long discourse, which Master Silas would at sundry times have interrupted, but that Sir Thomas more than once frowned upon him, even as he had frowned heretofore on young Will, who thus began and continued his narration :

“ Hearing the preacher preach at Saint Mary’s (for being about my father’s business on Saturday, and not choosing to be a-horseback on Sunday, albeit time-pressed, I footed it to Oxford for my edification on the Lord’s day, leaving the sorrel with Master Hal Webster of the *Tankard and Unicorn*) —hearing him preach, as I was saying, before the University in St Mary’s Church, and hearing him use moreover the very words that Matthew fought about, I was impatient (God forgive me!) for the end and consummation, and I thought I never should hear those precious words that ease every man’s heart, ‘ *Now to conclude.*’ However, come they did. I hurried out among the foremost, and thought the congratulations of the other doctors and dons would last for ever. He walked sharply off, and few cared to keep his pace; for they are lusty men mostly; and spiteful bad women had breathed * in the faces of some among them, or the gowns had got between their legs. For my part, I was not to be baulked; so, tripping on aside him, I looked in his face askance. Whether

* In that age there was prevalent a sort of cholera, on which Fracastorius, half a century before, wrote a Latin poem, employing the graceful nymphs of Homer and Hesiod, somewhat disguised, in the drudgery of pounding certain barks and minerals. An article in the Impeachment of Cardinal Wolsey accuses him of breathing in the king’s face, knowing that he was affected with this cholera. It was a great assistant to the Reformation, by removing some of the most vigorous champions that opposed it. In the Holy College it was followed by the *sweating sickness*, which thinned it very sorely; and several even of God’s vicegerents were laid under tribulation by it. Among the chambers of the Vatican it hung for ages, and it crowned the labours of Pope Leo XII., of blessed memory, with a crown somewhat uneasy.

he misgave or how, he turned his eyes downward. No matter, have him I would. I licked my lips and smacked them loud and smart, and scarcely venturing to nod, I gave my head such a sort of motion as dace and roach give an angler's quill when they begin to bite. And this fairly hooked him."

"Young gentleman!" said he, "where is your gown?"

"Reverend sir!" said I, "I am unworthy to wear one."

"A proper youth, nevertheless, and mightily well-spoken!" he was pleased to say.

"Your reverence hath given me heart, which failed me," was my reply. "Ah! your reverence! those words about the devil were spicy words; but, under favour, I do know the brook-side they sprang and flowered by. 'Tis just where it runs into Avon; 'tis called Hogbrook."

"Right!" quoth he, putting his hand gently on my shoulder; "but if I had thought it needful to say so in my sermon, I should have affronted the seniors of the University, since many claim them, and some peradventure would fain transpose them into higher places, and giving up all right and title to them, would accept in lieu thereof the poor recompense of a mitre."

"I wished (unworthy wish for a Sunday!) I had Matthew Atterend in the midst of them. He would have given them skulls mitre-fashioned, if mitres are cloven now as we see them on ancient monuments. Mat is your milliner for gentles, who think no more harm of purloining rich saws in a mitre than lane-born boys do of embezzling hazel nuts in a woollen cap. I did not venture to expound or suggest my thoughts, but feeling my choler rise higher and higher, I craved permission to make my obeisance and depart.

"Where dost thou lodge, young man?" said the preacher.

"At the public," said I, "where my father customarily lodgeth. There, too, is a mitre of the old fashion, swinging on the sign-post in the middle of the street."

"Respectable tavern enough!" quoth the reverend doctor; "and worthy men do turn in there, even quality,—Master Davenant, Master Powel, Master Whorwood, aged and grave men. But taverns are Satan's chapels, and are always well attended on the Lord's day, to twit him. Hast thou no friend in such a city as Oxford?"

“‘Only the landlady of the Mitre,’ said I.

“‘A comely woman,’ quoth he, ‘but too young for business by half.

‘Stay thou with me to-day, and fare frugally, but safely.

‘What may thy name be, and where is thy abode?’

“‘William Shakspeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon, at your service, sir.’

“‘And welcome,’ said he; ‘thy father ere now hath bought our college wool. A truly good man we ever found him; and I doubt not he hath educated his son to follow him in his paths. There is in the blood of man, as in the blood of animals, that which giveth the temper and disposition. These require nurture and culture. But what nurture will turn flint-stones into garden mould? or what culture rear cabbages in the quarries of Hedington Hill? To be well born is the greatest of all God’s primary blessings, young man, and there are many well born among the poor and needy. Thou art not of the indigent and destitute, who have great temptations; thou art not of the wealthy and affluent, who have greater still. God hath placed thee, William Shakspeare, in that pleasant island, on one side whereof are the sirens, on the other the harpies, but inhabiting the coasts on the wider continent, and unable to make their talons felt, or their voices heard by thee. Unite with me in prayer and thanksgiving for the blessings thus vouchsafed. We must not close the heart when the finger of God would touch it. Enough, if thou sayest only, *My soul, praise thou the Lord!*’”

Sir Thomas said, “*Amen!*” Master Silas was mute for the moment, but then quoth he, “I can say amen too in the proper place.”

The knight of Charlecote, who appeared to have been much taken with this conversation, then interrogated Willy:

“What farther might have been thy discourse with the doctor? or did he discourse at all at trencher-time? Thou must have been very much abashed to sit down at table with one who weareth a pure lambskin across his shoulder, and moreover a pink hood.”

Shakspeare. Faith! was I, your honour! and could neither utter nor gulp.

Sir Thomas. These are good signs. Thou hast not lost all grace.

Shakspeare. With the encouragement of Dr Glaston—

Sir Thomas. And was it Dr Glaston?

Shakspeare. Said I not so?

Sir Thomas. The learnedst clerk in Christendom! a very Friar Bacon! The Pope offered a hundred marks in Latin to who should eviscerate or evirate him (poisons very potent, whereat the Italians are handy); so apostolic and desperate a doctor is Doctor Glaston! so acute in his quiddities, and so resolute in his bearing! He knows the dark arts, but stands aloof from them. Prithee, what were his words unto thee?

Shakspeare. Manna, sir, manna! pure from the desert!

Sir Thomas. Ay, but what spake he? for most sermons are that, and likewise many conversations after dinner.

Shakspeare. He spake of the various races and qualities of men, as before stated; but chiefly on the elect and reprobate, and how to distinguish and know them.

Sir Thomas. Did he go so far?

Shakspeare. He told me that by such discussion he should say enough to keep me constantly out of evil company.

Sir Thomas. See there! see there! and yet thou art come before me! Can nothing warn thee?

Shakspeare. I dare not dissemble, nor feign, nor hold aught back, although it be to my confusion. As well may I speak at once the whole truth; for your worship could find it out if I abstained.

Sir Thomas. Ay, that I should indeed, and shortly. But, come now, I am sated of thy follies and roguish tricks, and yearn after the sound doctrine of that pious man. What expounded the grave Glaston upon signs and tokens whereby ye shall be known?

Shakspeare. Wonderful things! things beyond belief! “There be certain men,” quoth he—

Sir Thomas. He began well. This promises. But why canst not thou go on?

Shakspeare. “There be certain men, who, rubbing one corner of the eye, do see a peacock’s feather at the other, and even fire. We know, William, what that fire is, and whence

it cometh. Those wicked men, William, all have their marks upon them, be it only a corn, or a wart, or a mole, or a hairy ear, or a toe-nail turned inward. Sufficient, and more than sufficient ! He knoweth his own by less tokens. There is not one of them that doth not sweat at some secret sin committed, or some inclination toward it unsanctified.

“ Certain men are there, likewise, who venerate so little the glorious works of the Creator that I myself have known them to sneeze at the sun ! Sometimes it was against their will, and they would gladly have checked it had they been able ; but they were forced to shew what they are. In our carnal state we say, *What is one against numbers ?* In another we shall truly say, *What are numbers against one ?* ”

. . . Sir Thomas did ejaculate, “ *Amen ! Amen !* ” And then his lips moved silently, piously, and quickly ; and then said he, audibly and loudly,—

“ *And make us at last true Israelites !* ”

After which he turned to young Willy, and said, anxiously, “ Hast thou more, lad ? give us it while the Lord strengtheneth.”

“ Sir,” answered Willy, “ although I thought it no trouble, on my return to the *Mitre*, to write down every word I could remember, and although few did then escape me, yet at this present I can bring to mind but scanty sentences, and those so stray and out of order that they would only prove my incapacity for sterling wisdom, and my incontinence of spiritual treasure.”

Sir Thomas. Even that sentence hath a twang of the doctor in it. Nothing is so sweet as humility. The mountains may descend, but the valleys cannot rise. Every man should know himself. Come, repeat what thou canst. I would fain have three or four more heads.

Shakspeare. I know not whether I can give your worship more than one other. Let me try. It was when Doctor Glaston was discoursing on the protection the wise and powerful should afford to the ignorant and weak :

“ In the earlier ages of mankind, your Greek and Latin authors inform you, there went forth sundry worthies, men of might, to deliver, not wandering damsels, albeit for those like-

wise they had stowage, but low-conditioned men, who fell under the displeasure of the higher, and groaned in thraldom and captivity. And these mighty ones were believed to have done such services to poor humanity that their memory grew greater than they, as shadows do than substances at day-fall. And the sons and grandsons of the delivered did laud and magnify those glorious names ; and some in gratitude, and some in tribulation, did ascend the hills, which appeared unto them as altars bestrown with flowers and herbage for heaven's acceptance. And many did go far into the quiet groves, under lofty trees, looking for whatever was mightiest and most protecting. And in such places did they cry aloud unto the mighty who had left them, '*Return ! return ! help us ! help us ! be blessed ! for ever blessed !*'

"Vain men ! but had they stayed there, not evil. Out of gratitude, purest gratitude, rose idolatry. For the devil sees the fairest, and soils it.

"In these our days, methinks, whatever other sins we may fall into, such idolatry is the least dangerous. For neither on the one side is there much disposition for gratitude, nor on the other much zeal to deliver the innocent and oppressed. Even this deliverance, although a merit, and a high one, is not the highest. Forgiveness is beyond it. Forgive, or ye shall not be forgiven. This ye may do every day ; for if ye find not offences, ye feign them ; and surely ye may remove your own work, if ye may remove another's. To rescue requires more thought and wariness ; learn, then, the easier lesson first. Afterward, when ye rescue any from another's violence, or from his own (which oftentimes is more dangerous, as the enemies are within not only the penetrals of his house but of his heart), bind up his wounds before ye send him on his way. Should ye at any time overtake the erring, and resolve to deliver him up, I will tell you whither to conduct him. Conduct him to his Lord and Master, whose household he hath left. It is better to consign him to Christ his Saviour than to man his murderer ; it is better to bid him live than to bid him die. The one word our Teacher and Preserver said, the other our enemy and destroyer. Bring him back again, the stray, the lost one ! bring him back, not with clubs and

cudgels, not with halberts and halters, but generously and gently, and with the linking of the arm. In this posture shall God above smile upon ye ; in this posture of yours he shall recognize again his beloved Son upon earth. Do ye likewise, and depart in peace."

William had ended, and there was silence in the hall for some time after, when Sir Thomas said,

" He spake unto somewhat mean persons, who may do it without disparagement. I look for authority. I look for doctrine, and find none yet. If he could not have drawn us out a thread or two from the coat of an apostle, he might have given us a smack of Augustin, or a sprig of Basil. Our older sermons are headier than these, Master Silas ! our new beer is the sweeter and clammier, and wants more spice. The doctor hath seasoned his pretty wit enough, to do him justice, which in a sermon is never out of place ; for if there be the bane, there likewise is the antidote.

" What dost thou think about it, Master Silas ? "

Sir Silas. I would not give ten farthings for ten folios of such sermons.

Shakspeare. These words, Master Silas, will oftener be quoted than any others of thine ; but rarely (do I suspect) as applicable to Doctor Glaston. I must stick unto his gown. I must declare that, to my poor knowledge, many have been raised to the bench of bishops for less wisdom and worse than is contained in the few sentences I have been commanded by authority to recite. No disparagement to any body ! I know, Master Silas, and multitudes bear witness, that thou above most art a dead hand at a sermon.

Sir Silas. Touch my sermons, wilt dare ?

Shakspeare. Nay, Master Silas, be not angered ; it is courage enough to hear them.

Sir Thomas. Now, Silas, hold thy peace and rest contented. He hath excused himself unto thee, throwing in a compliment far above his station, and not unworthy of Rome or Florence. I did not think him so ready. Our Warwickshire lads are fitter for football than courtesies ; and, sooth to say, not only the inferior.

. . . His worship turned from Master Silas toward Wil-

liam, and said, "Brave Willy, thou hast given us our bitters; we are ready now for anything solid. What hast left?"

Shakspeare. Little or nothing, sir.

Sir Thomas. Well, give us that little or nothing.

.. William Shakspeare was obedient to the commands of Sir Thomas, who had spoken thus kindly unto him, and had deigned to cast at him from his "lordly dish" (as the Psalmist hath it) a fragment of facetiousness.

Shakspeare. Alas, sir! may I repeat it without offence, it not being doctrine but admonition, and meant for me only?

Sir Thomas. Speak it the rather for that.

.. Then did William give utterance to the words of the preacher, not indeed in his sermon at St Mary's, but after dinner.

"Lust seizeth us in youth, ambition in mid-life, avarice in old age; but vanity and pride are the besetting sins that drive the angels from our cradle, pamper us with luscious and most unwholesome food, ride our first stick with us, mount our first horse with us, wake with us in the morning, dream with us in the night, and never at any time abandon us. In this world, beginning with pride and vanity, we are delivered over from tormentor to tormentor, until the worst tormentor of all taketh absolute possession of us for ever, seizing us at the mouth of the grave, en chaining us in his own dark dungeon, standing at the door, and laughing at our cries. But the Lord, out of his infinite mercy, hath placed in the hand of every man the helm to steer his course by, pointing it out with his finger, and giving him strength as well as knowledge to pursue it.

"William! William! there is in the moral straits a current from right to wrong, but no reflux from wrong to right; for which destination we must hoist our sails aloft and ply our oars incessantly, or night and the tempest will overtake us, and we shall shriek out in vain from the billows, and irrecoverably sink."

"Amen!" cried Sir Thomas most devoutly, sustaining his voice long and loud.

"Open that casement, good Silas! the day is sultry for the season of the year; it approacheth unto noontide. The room is close, and those blue flies do make a strange hubbub."

Shakspeare. In troth do they, sir ; they come from the kitchen, and do savour woundily of roast goose ! And, methinks—

Sir Thomas. What bethinkest thou ?

Shakspeare. The fancy of a moment,—a light and vain one.

Sir Thomas. Thou relievest me ; speak it.

Shakspeare. How could the creatures cast their coarse rank odour thus far?—even into your presence ! A noble and spacious hall ! Charlecote, in my mind, beats Warwick Castle, and challenges Kenilworth.

Sir Thomas. The hall is well enough ; I must say it is a noble hall,—a hall for a queen to sit down in. And I stuffed an arm-chair with horse-hair on purpose, feathers over it, swandown over them again, and covered it with scarlet cloth of Bruges, five crowns the short ell. But her highness came not hither ; she was taken short ; she had a tongue in her ear.

Shakspeare. Where all is spring, all is buzz and murmur.

Sir Thomas. Quaint and solid as the best yew hedge ! I marvel at thee. A knight might have spoken it, under favour. They stopped her at Warwick—to see what ? two old towers that don't match,* and a portcullis that (people

* Sir Thomas seems to have been jealous of these two towers, certainly the finest in England. If Warwick Castle could borrow the windows from Kenilworth, it would be complete.¹¹

[¹¹ This note in 1st ed. reads : “complete. The knight is not very courteous on its hospitality. He may, perhaps, have experienced it, as Garrick and Quin did under the present occupant's grandfather, on whom the title of Earl of Warwick was conferred for the eminent services he had rendered to his country as one of the lords of the bed-chamber to his Majesty George the Second. The verses of Garrick on his invitation and visit are remembered by many. Quin's are less known.

“ He shewed us Guy's pot, but the soup he forgot ;
Not a meal did his lordship allow,
Unless we gnaw'd o'er the blade-bone of the boar,
Or the rib of the famous *Dun Cow*.

“ When Neville the great Earl of Warwick lived here,
Three oxen for breakfast were slain,
And strangers invited to sports and good cheer,
And invited again and again.

say) opens only upon fast-days. Charlecote Hall, I could have told her sweet Highness, was built by those Lucy's who came over with Julius Cæsar and William the Conqueror, with cross and scallop-shell on breast and beaver.

“But, honest Willy! ? —”

... Such were the very words; I wrote them down with two signs in the margent,—one a mark of admiration, as thus (!), the other of interrogation (so we call it) as thus (?).

“But, honest Willy, I would fain hear more,” quoth he, “about the learned Doctor Glaston. He seemeth to be a man after God's own heart.”

Shakspeare. Ay is he! Never doth he sit down to dinner but he readeth first a chapter of the Revelations; and if he tasteth a pound of butter at Carfax, he saith a grace long enough to bring an appetite for a baked bull's* —zle. If this be not after God's own heart, I know not what is.

Sir Thomas. I would fain confer with him, but that Oxford lieth afar off; a matter of thirty miles, I hear. I might, indeed, write unto him; but our Warwickshire pens are mighty broad-nibbed, and there is a something in this plaguy ink of ours sadly ropy.

“I fear there is,” quoth Willy.

“And I should scorn,” continued his worship, “to write otherwise than in a fine Italian character to the master of a college, near in dignity to knighthood.”

“This Earl is in purse or in spirit so low,
That he with no oxen will feed 'em;
And all of the former great doings we know
Is, he gives us a book and we read 'em.

GARRICK.

“*Stale* peers are but tough morsels, and 'twere well
If we had found the *fresh* more eatable;
Garrick! I do not say 'twere well for *him*,
For we had pluck'd the plover limb from limb.

QUIN.”]

* Another untoward blot! but leaving no doubt of the word. The only doubt is whether he meant the *muzzle* of the animal itself, or one of those leather muzzles which are often employed to coerce the violence of ferocious animals. In besieged cities men have been reduced to such extremities. But the *muzzle*, in this place, we suspect, would more properly be called the *blinker*, which is often put upon bulls in pastures when they are vicious.

Shakspeare. Worshipful sir ! is there no other way of communicating but by person, or writing, or messages ?

Sir Thomas. I will consider and devise. At present I can think of none so satisfactory.

. . . And now did the great clock over the gateway strike. And Bill Shakspeare did move his lips, even as Sir Thomas had moved his erewhile in ejaculating. And when he had wagged them twice or thrice after the twelve strokes of the clock were over, again he ejaculated with voice also, saying,

“ Mercy upon us ! how the day wears ! Twelve strokes ! Might I retire, please your worship, into the chapel for about three quarters of an hour, and perform the service * as ordained ? ”

Before Sir Thomas could give him leave or answer, did Sir Silas cry aloud,

“ He would purloin the chalice, worth forty-eight shillings, and melt it down in the twinkling of an eye, he is so crafty.”

But the knight was more reasonable, and said, reprovingly,

“ There now, Silas ! thou talkest widely, and verily in malice, if there be any in thee.”

“ Try him,” answered Master Silas ; “ I don’t kneel where he does. Could he have but his wicked will of me he would chop my legs off, as he did the poor buck’s.”

Sir Thomas. No, no, no ; he hath neither guile nor revenge in him. We may let him have his way, now that he hath taken the right one.

Sir Silas. Popery ! sheer popery ! strong as hartshorn ! Your papists keep these outlandish hours for their masses and mummary. Surely we might let God alone at twelve o’clock ! Have we no bowels ?

* Let not this countenance the opinion that Shakspeare was a Roman Catholic. His contempt of priests may have originated from the unfairness of Silas. Friars he treats kindly, perhaps in return for somewhat less services than Friar Lawrence’s to Romeo.¹²

[¹² In 1st ed., after words in substance the same as given here, there was added : “ for Shakespeare was grateful. The words quoted by him from some sermon, now lost, prove him no friend to the filchings and swindling of popery.”]

Shakspeare. Gracious sir ! I do not urge it ; and the time is now passed by some minutes.

Sir Thomas. Art thou popishly inclined, William ?

Shakspeare. Sir, I am not popishly inclined ; I am not inclined to pay tribute of coin or understanding to those who rush forward with a pistol at my breast, crying, "Stand, or you are a dead man." I have but one guide in faith, a powerful, an almighty one. He will not suffer to waste away and vanish the faith for which he died. He hath chosen in all countries pure hearts for its depositaries ; and I would rather take it from a friend and neighbour, intelligent and righteous, and rejecting lucre, than from some foreigner educated in the pride of cities or in the moroseness of monasteries, who sells me what Christ gave me, his own flesh and blood.

I can repeat by heart what I read above a year agone, albeit I cannot bring to mind the title of the book in which I read it. These are the words.

"The most venal and sordid of all the superstitions that have swept and darkened our globe may, indeed, like African locusts, have consumed the green corn in very extensive regions, and may return periodically to consume it ; but the strong, unwearied labourer who sowed it hath alway sown it in other places less exposed to such devouring pestilences. Those cunning men who formed to themselves the gorgeous plan of universal dominion were aware that they had a better chance of establishing it than brute ignorance or brute force could supply, and that soldiers and their paymasters were subject to other and powerfuller fears than the transitory ones of war and invasion. What they found in heaven they seized ; and what they wanted they forged.

"And so long as there is vice and ignorance in the world, so long as fear is a passion, their dominion will prevail ; but their dominion is not, and never shall be, universal. Can we wonder that it is so general ? Can we wonder that anything is wanting to give it authority and effect, when every learned, every prudent, every powerful, every ambitious man in Europe, for above a thousand years, united in the league to consolidate it ?

"The old dealers in the shambles, where Christ's body is

exposed for sale in convenient marketable slices,¹³ have not covered with blood and filth the whole pavement. Beautiful usages are remaining still, kindly affections, radiant hopes, and ardent aspirations !

“ It is a comfortable thing to reflect, as they do, and as we may do unblamably, that we are uplifting to our Guide and Maker the same incense of the heart, and are uttering the very words, which our dearest friends in all quarters of the earth, nay in heaven itself, are offering to the throne of grace at the same moment.

“ Thus are we together through the immensity of space. What are these bodies? Do they unite us? No; they keep us apart and asunder even while we touch. Realms and oceans, worlds and ages, open before two spirits bent on heaven. What a choir surrounds us when we resolve to live unitedly and harmoniously in Christian faith ! ”

Sir Thomas. Now, Silas, what sayest thou?

Sir Silas. Ignorant fool!

Shakspeare. Ignorant fools are bearable, Master Silas! your wise ones are the worst.

Sir Thomas. Prithee no bandying of loggerheads.

Shakspeare.

Or else what mortal man shall say
Whose shins may suffer in the fray?

Sir Thomas. Thou reasonest aptly and timest well. And surely, being now in so rational and religious a frame of mind, thou couldst recall to memory a section or head or two of the sermon holden at St Mary's. It would do thee and us as much good as *Lighten our darkness*, or *Forasmuch as it hath pleased*; and somewhat less than three quarters of an hour (maybe less than one quarter) sufficeth.

Sir Silas. Or he hangs without me. I am for dinner in half the time.

[¹³ In 1st ed. the following note was printed: “ It is a pity that the old divines should have indulged, as they often did, in such images as this. Some readers in search of argumentative subtlety, some in search of sound Christianity, some in search of pure English undefiled, have gone through with them; and their labours (however heavy) have been well repaid.”]

Sir Thomas. Silas! Silas! he hangeth not with thee or without thee.

Sir Silas. He thinketh himself a clever fellow; but he (look ye) is the cleverest that gets off.

“I hold quite the contrary,” quoth Will Shakspeare, winking at Master Silas from the comfort and encouragement he had just received touching the hanging.

And Master Silas had his answer ready, and shewed that he was more than a match for poor Willy in wit and poetry.

He answered thus:—

“ If winks are wit,
Who wanteth it?

Thou hadst other bolts to kill bucks withal. In wit, sirrah, thou art a mere child.”

Shakspeare. Little dogs are jealous of children, great ones fondle them.

Sir Thomas. An that were written in the *Apocrypha*, in the very teeth of Bel and the Dragon, it could not be truer. I have witnessed it with my own eyes over and over.

Sir Silas. He will take this for wit, likewise, now the arms of Lucy do seal it.

Sir Thomas. Silas, they may stamp wit, they may further wit, they may send wit into good company, but not make it.

Shakspeare. Behold my wall of defence!

Sir Silas. An thou art for walls, I have one for thee from Oxford, pithy and apposite, sound and solid, and trimmed up becomingly, as a collar of brawn with a crown of rosemary, or a boar’s head with a lemon in the mouth.

Shakspeare. Egad, Master Silas, those are your walls for lads to climb over, an they were higher than Babel’s.

Sir Silas. Have at thee!

Thou art a wall
To make the ball
Rebound from.

Thou hast a back
For beadle’s crack
To sound from, to sound from.

The foolishest dolts are the ground-plot of the most wit, as the idlest rogues are of the most industry. Even thou hast brought wit down from Oxford. And before a thief is hanged, parliament must make laws, attorneys must engross them, printers stamp and publish them, hawkers cry them, judges expound them, juries weigh and measure them with offences, then executioners carry them into effect. The farmer hath already sewn the hemp, the ropemaker hath twisted it; sawyers saw the timber, carpenters tack together the shell, grave-diggers delve the earth. And all this truly for fellows like unto thee.

Shakspeare. Whom a God came down from heaven to save!

Sir Thomas. Silas! he hangeth not. William, I must have the heads of the sermon, six or seven of 'em; thou hast whetted my appetite keenly. How! dost duck thy pate into thy hat? nay, nay, that is proper and becoming at church; we need not such solemnity. Repeat unto us the setting forth at St Mary's.

. . . Whereupon did William Shakspeare entreat of Master Silas that he would help him in his ghostly endeavours, by repeating what he called the *preliminary* prayer; which prayer I find nowhere in our ritual, and do suppose it to be one of those Latin supplications used in our learned universities now or erewhile.

I am afraid it hath not the approbation of the strictly orthodox, for inasmuch as Master Silas at such entreaty did close his teeth against it, and with teeth thus closed did say, Athanasius-wise, "Go and be damned!"

Bill was not disheartened, but said he hoped better, and began thus:

" ' My brethren ! ' said the preacher, ' or rather let me call you my children, such is my age confronted with yours, for the most part,—my children, then, and my brethren (for here are both), believe me, killing is forbidden.' "

Sir Thomas. This, not being delivered unto us from the pulpit by the preacher himself, we may look into. Sensible man! shrewd reasoner! What a stroke against deer-stealers! how full of truth and ruth! Excellent discourse!

Shakspeare. The last part was the best.

Sir Thomas. I always find it so. The softest of the cheesecake is left in the platter when the crust is eaten. He kept the best bit for the last, then? He pushed it under the salt, eh? He told thee—

Shakspeare. Exactly so.

Sir Thomas. What was it?

Shakspeare. "Ye shall not kill."

Sir Thomas. How! did he run in a circle like a hare? One of his mettle should break cover and off across the country like a fox or hart.

Shakspeare. "And yet ye kill time when ye can, and are uneasy when ye cannot."

... Whereupon did Sir Thomas say, aside unto himself, but within my hearing,

"Faith and troth! he must have had a head in at the window here one day or other."

Shakspeare. "This sin cryeth unto the Lord."

Sir Thomas. He was wrong there. It is not one of those that cry; mortal sins cry. Surely he could not have fallen into such an error! it must be thine; thou misunderstoodst him.

Shakspeare. Mayhap, sir! A great heaviness came over me; I was oppressed in spirit, and did feel as one awakening from a dream.

Sir Thomas. Godlier men than thou art do often feel the right hand of the Lord upon their heads in like manner. It followeth contrition, and precedeth conversion. Continue.

Shakspeare. "My brethren and children," said the teacher, "whenever ye want to kill time call God to the chase, and bid the angels blow the horn; and thus ye are sure to kill time to your heart's content. And ye may feast another day, and another after that—"

Then said Master Silas unto me, concernedly,

"This is the mischief-fullest of all the devil's imps, to talk in such wise at a quarter past twelve!"

But William went straight on, not hearing him,

"—upon what ye shall, in such pursuit, have brought home with you. Whereas, if ye go alone, or two or three together, nay, even if ye go in thick and gallant company,

and yet provide not that these be with ye, my word for it, and a powerfuller word than mine, ye shall return to your supper tired and jaded, and rest little when ye want to rest most.”

“Hast no other head of the Doctor’s?” quoth Sir Thomas.

“Verily none,” replied Willy, “of the morning’s discourse, saving the last words of it, which, with God’s help, I shall always remember.”

“Give us them, give us them,” said Sir Thomas.

“He wants doctrine; he wants authority; his are grains of millet; grains for unfledged doves; but they are sound, except the crying.

Deliver unto us the last words; for the last of the preacher, as of the hanged, are usually the best.”

Then did William repeat the concluding words of the discourse, being these:

“As years are running past us, let us throw something on them which they cannot shake off in the dust and hurry of the world, but must carry with them to that great year of all, whereunto the lesser of this mortal life do tend and are subservient.”

Sir Thomas, after a pause, and after having bent his knee under the table, as though there had been the church-cushion, said unto us,

“Here he spake *through a glass, darkly*, as blessed Paul hath it.”

Then turning toward Willy,

“And nothing more?”

“Nothing but the *glory*,” quoth Willy, “at which there is always such a clatter of feet upon the floor, and creaking of benches, and rustling of gowns, and bustle of bonnets, and justle of cushions, and dust of mats, and treading of toes, and punching of elbows, from the spitefuller, that one wishes to be fairly out of it, after the scramble for *the peace of God* is at an end—”

Sir Thomas threw himself back upon his armchair, and exclaimed in wonderment, “How!”

Shakspeare. “. . . And in the midst of the service again,

were it possible. For nothing is painfuller than to have the pail shaken off the head when it is brim-full of the waters of life, and we are walking staidly under it."

Sir Thomas. Had the learned Doctor preached again in the evening, pursuing the thread of his discourse, he might, peradventure, have made up the deficiencies I find in him.

Shakspeare. He had not that opportunity.

Sir Thomas. The more's the pity.

Shakspeare. The evening admonition, delivered by him unto the household—

Sir Thomas. What! and did he indeed shew wind enough for that? Prithee out with it, if thou didst put it into thy tablets.

Shakspeare. Alack, sir! there were so many Latin words, I fear me I should be at fault in such an attempt.

Sir Thomas. Fear not; we can help thee out between us, were there a dozen or a score.

Shakspeare. Bating those latinities, I do verily think I could tie up again most of the points in his doublet.

Sir Thomas. At him then! What was his bearing?

Shakspeare. In dividing his matter, he spooned out and apportioned the commons in his discourse, as best suited the quality, capacity, and constitution of his hearers. To those in priests' orders he delivered a sort of catechism.

Sir Silas. He catechise grown men! He catechise men in priests' orders!—being no bishop, nor bishop's ordinary!

Shakspeare. He did so; it may be at his peril.

Sir Thomas. And what else? for catechisms are baby's pap.

Shakspeare. He did not catechise, but he admonished the richer gentlemen with gold tassels for their top-knots.

Sir Silas. I thought as much. It was no better in my time. Admonitions fell gently upon those gold tassels; and they ripened degrees as glass and sunshine ripen cucumbers. We priests, forsooth, are catechised! The worst question to any gold tasseller is, "How do you do?" Old Alma Mater coaxes and would be coaxed. But let her look sharp, or spectacles may be thrust upon her nose that shall make her eyes water. Aristotle could make out no royal road to wis-

dom ; but this old woman of ours will shew you one, an you tip her.

Tilley valley ! * catechise priests, indeed !

Sir Thomas. Peradventure he did it discreetly. Let us examine and judge him. Repeat thou what he said unto them.

Shakspeare. "Many," said he, "are ingenuous, many are devout, some timidly, some strenuously, but nearly all flinch, and rear, and kick, at the slightest touch, or least inquisitive suspicion of an unsound part in their doctrine. And yet, my brethren, we ought rather to flinch and feel sore at our own searching touch, our own serious inquisition into ourselves. Let us preachers, who are sufficiently liberal in bestowing our advice upon others, inquire of ourselves whether the exercise of spiritual authority may not be sometimes too pleasant, tickling our breasts with a plume from Satan's wing, and turning our heads with that inebriating poison which he hath been seen to instil into the very chalice of our salvation. Let us ask ourselves in the closet whether, after we have humbled ourselves before God in our prayers, we never rise beyond the due standard in the pulpit ; whether our zeal for the truth be never over-heated by internal fires less holy ; whether we never grow stiffly and sternly pertinacious, at the very time when we are reproving the obstinacy of others ; and whether we have not frequently so acted as if we believed that opposition were to be relaxed and borne away by self-sufficiency and intolerance. Believe me, the wisest of us have our catechism to learn ; and these, my dear friends, are not the only questions contained in it. No Christian can hate ; no Christian can malign. Nevertheless, do we not often both hate and malign those unhappy men who are insensible to God's mercies ? And I fear this unchristian spirit swells darkly, with all its venom, in the marble of our hearts, not because our brother is insensible to these mercies, but because he is insensible to our faculty of persuasion, turning a deaf ear unto our claim upon his obedience, or a blind or sleepy eye upon the fountain of light, whereof we deem ourselves the sacred

* *Tilley valley* was the favourite adjuration of James the Second. It appears in the comedies of Shakspeare.

reservoirs. There is one more question at which ye will tremble when ye ask it in the recesses of your souls ; I do tremble at it, yet must utter it. Whether we do not more warmly and erectly stand up for God's word because it came from our mouths, than because it came from his ? Learned and ingenious men may indeed find a solution and excuse for all these propositions ; but the wise unto salvation will cry, ' Forgive me, O my God, if, called by thee to walk in thy way, I have not swept this dust from the sanctuary ! ' "

Sir Thomas. All this, methinks, is for the behoof of clerks and ministers.

Shakspeare. He taught them what they who teach others should learn and practise. Then did he look toward the young gentlemen of large fortune ; and lastly his glances fell upon us poorer folk, whom he instructed in the duty we owe to our superiors.

Sir Thomas. Ay, there he had a host.

Shakspeare. In one part of his admonition he said,

" Young gentlemen ! let not the highest of you who hear me this evening be led into the delusion, for such it is, that the founder of his family was *originally* a greater or a better man than the lowest here. He willed it, and became it. He must have stood low ; he must have worked hard ; and with tools, moreover, of his own invention and fashioning. He waved and whistled off ten thousand strong and importunate temptations ; he dashed the dice-box from the jewelled hand of Chance, the cup from Pleasure's, and trod under foot the sorceries of each ; he ascended steadily the precipices of Danger, and looked down with intrepidity from the summit ; he overawed Arrogance with Sedateness ; he seized by the horn and overleaped low Violence ; and he fairly swung Fortune round.

" The very high cannot rise much higher ; the very low may : the truly great must have done it.

" This is not the doctrine, my friends, of the silkenly and lawny religious ; it wears the coarse texture of the fisherman, and walks uprightly and straightforward under it. I am speaking now more particularly to you among us upon whom God hath laid the incumbrances of wealth, the sweets whereof

bring teasing and poisonous things about you, not easily sent away. What now are your pretensions under sacks of money? or your enjoyments under the shade of genealogical trees? Are they rational? Are they real? Do they exist at all? Strange inconsistency! to be proud of having as much gold and silver laid upon you as a mule hath, and yet to carry it less composedly! The mule is not answerable for the conveyance and discharge of his burden: you are. Stranger infatuation still! to be prouder of an excellent thing done by another than by yourselves, supposing any excellent thing to have actually been done; and, after all, to be more elated on his cruelties than his kindnesses, by the blood he hath spilt than by the benefits he had conferred; and to acknowledge less obligation to a well-informed and well-intentioned progenitor than to a lawless and ferocious barbarian. Would stocks and stumps, if they could utter words, utter such gross stupidity? Would the apple boast of his crab origin, or the peach of his prune? Hardly any man is ashamed of being inferior to his ancestors, although it is the very thing at which the great should blush, if, indeed, the great in general descended from the worthy. I did expect to see the day, and although I shall not see it, it must come at last, when he shall be treated as a madman or an impostor who dares to claim nobility or precedence and cannot shew his family name in the history of his country. Even he who can shew it, and who cannot write his own under it in the same or as goodly characters, must submit to the imputation of degeneracy, from which the lowly and obscure are exempt.

“ He alone who maketh you wiser maketh you greater; and it is only by such an implement that Almighty God himself effects it. When he taketh away a man’s wisdom he taketh away his strength, his power over others and over himself. What help for him then! He may sit idly and swell his spleen, saying, *Who is this? who is that?* and at the question’s end the spirit of inquiry dies away in him. It would not have been so if, in happier hour, he had said within himself, *Who am I? what am I?* and had prosecuted the search in good earnest.

“ When we ask who *this* man is, or who *that* man is, we

do not expect or hope for a plain answer ; we should be disappointed at a direct, or a rational, or a kind one. We desire to hear that he was of low origin, or had committed some crime, or been subjected to some calamity. Whoever he be, in general we disregard or despise him, unless we discover that he possesseth by nature many qualities of mind and body which he never brings into use, and many accessories of situation and fortune which he brings into abuse every day. According to the arithmetic in practice, he who makes the most idlers and the most ingrates is the most worshipful. But wiser ones than the scorers in this school will tell you how riches and power were bestowed by Providence that generosity and mercy should be exercised ; for, if every gift of the Almighty were distributed in equal portions to every creature, less of such virtues would be called into the field ; consequently there would be less of gratitude, less of submission, less of devotion, less of hope, and, in the total, less of content."

Here he ceased, and Sir Thomas nodded, and said,

" Reasonable enough ! nay, almost too reasonable !

But where are the apostles ? Where are the disciples ?
Where are the saints ? Where is hell-fire ?

Well ! patience ! we may come to it yet. Go on,
Will ! "

With such encouragement before him, did Will Shakspeare take breath and continue :

" 'We mortals are too much accustomed to behold our superiors in rank and station as we behold the leaves in the forest. While we stand under these leaves, our protection and refuge from heat and labour, we see only the rougher side of them, and the gloominess of the branches on which they hang. In the midst of their benefits we are insensible to their utility and their beauty, and appear to be ignorant that if they were placed less high above us we should derive from them less advantage.' "

Sir Thomas. Ay ; envy of superiority made the angels kick and run restive.

Shakspeare. May it please your worship ! with all my faults, I have ever borne due submission and reverence toward my superiors.

Sir Thomas. Very right ! very scriptural ! But most folks do that. Our duty is not fulfilled unless we bear absolute veneration ; unless we are ready to lay down our lives and fortunes at the foot of the throne, and every thing else at the foot of those who administer the laws under virgin majesty.

Shakspeare. Honoured sir ! I am quite ready to lay down my life and fortune, and all the rest of me, before that great virgin.

Sir Silas. Thy life and fortune, to wit !

What are they worth ? A June cob-nut, maggot and all.

Sir Thomas. Silas, we will not repudiate nor rebuff his Magdalen, that bringeth a pot of ointment. Rather let us teach and tutor than twit. It is a tractable and conductible youth, being in good company.

Sir Silas. Teach and tutor ! Hold hard, sir ! These base varlets ought to be taught but two things : to bow as be seemeth them to their betters, and to hang perpendicular. We have authority for it, that no man can add an inch to his stature ; but by aid of the sheriff I engage to find a chap who shall add two or three to this whoreson's.*

Sir Thomas. Nay, nay, now, Silas ! the lad's mother was always held to be an honest woman.

Sir Silas. His mother may be an honest woman for me.

Shakspeare. No small privilege, by my faith ! for any woman in the next parish to thee, Master Silas !

Sir Silas. There again ! out comes the filthy runlet from the quagmire, that but now lay so quiet with all its own in it.

Shakspeare. Until it was trodden on by the ass that could not leap over it. These, I think, are the words of the fable.

Sir Thomas. They are so.

Sir Silas. What fable ?

* *Whoreson*, if we may hazard a conjecture, means the son of a woman of ill-repute. In this we are borne out by the context. It appears to have escaped the commentators on *Shakspeare*.

Whoreson, a word of frequent occurrence in the comedies ; more rarely found in the tragedies. Although now obsolete, the expression proves that there were (or were believed to be) such persons formerly.

The Editor is indebted to two learned friends for these two remarks, which appear no less just than ingenious.

Sir Thomas. Tush ! don't press him too hard ; he wants not wit, but learning.

Sir Silas. He wants a rope's-end ; and a rope's-end is not enough for him, unless we throw in the other.

Sir Thomas. Peradventure he may be an instrument, a potter's clay, a type, a token.

I have seen many young men, and none like unto him. He is shallow but clear ; he is simple, but ingenuous.

Sir Silas. Drag the ford again, then. In my mind he is as deep as the big tankard ; and a mouthful of rough burrage will be the beginning and end of it.

Sir Thomas. No fear of that. Neither, if rightly reported by the youngster, is there so much doctrine in the doctor as we expected. He doth not dwell upon the main ; he is worldly ; he is wise in his generation,—he says things out of his own head.

Silas, that can't hold ! We want *props*, *fulcrums*, I think you called 'em to the farmers ; or was it *stimulums* ?

Sir Silas. Both very good words.

Sir Thomas. I should be mightily pleased to hear thee dispute with that great don.

Sir Silas. I hate disputations. Saint Paul warns us against them. If one wants to be thirsty, the tail of a stockfish is as good for it as the head of a logician.

The doctor there, at Oxford, is in flesh and mettle ; but let him be sleek and gingered as he may, clap me in St Mary's pulpit, cassock me, lamb-skin me, give me pink for my colours, glove me to the elbow, heel-piece me half an ell high, cushion me before and behind, bring me a mug of mild ale and a rasher of bacon, only just to con over the text withal ; then allow me fair play, and as much of my own way as he had, and the devil take the hindmost. I am his man at any time.

Sir Thomas. I am fain to believe it. Verily, I do think, Silas, thou hast as much stuff in thee as most men. Our beef and mutton at Charlecote rear other than babes and sucklings.

I like words taken, like thine, from black-letter books. They look stiff and sterling, and as though a man might dig about 'em for a week, and never loosen the lightest.

Thou hast alway at hand either saint or devil, as occasion needeth, according to the quality of the sinner, and they never come uncalled for. Moreover, Master Silas, I have observed that thy hell-fire is generally lighted up in the pulpit about the dog-days.

“ . . . Then turned the worthy knight unto the youth, saying, ‘ ‘ ‘ Twere well for thee, William Shakspeare, if the learned doctor had kept thee longer in his house, and had shewn unto thee the danger of idleness, which hath often led unto deer-stealing and poetry. In thee we already know the one, although the distemper hath eaten but skin-deep for the present ; and we have the testimony of two burgesses on the other. The pursuit of poetry, as likewise of game, is unforbidden to persons of condition.’ ’ ’ ”

Shakspeare. Sir, that of game is the more likely to keep them in it.

Sir Thomas. It is the more knightly of the two ; but poetry hath also her pursuers among us. I myself, in my youth, had some experience that way ; and I am fain to blush at the reputation I obtained. His honour, my father, took me to London at the age of twenty ; and, sparing no expense in my education, gave fifty shillings to one Monsieur Dubois to teach me fencing and poetry, in twenty lessons. In vacant hours he taught us also the laws of honour, which are different from ours.

In France you are unpolite unless you solicit a judge or his wife to favour your cause ; and you inevitably lose it. In France there is no want of honour where there is no want of courage ; you may lie, but you must not hear that you lie. I asked him what he thought then of lying ; and he replied,—

“ C'est selon.”

“ And suppose you should overhear the whisper ? ”

“ Ah, parbleu ! Cela m'irrite ; cela me pousse au bout.”

I was going on to remark that a real man of honour could less bear to lie than to hear it ; when he cried, at the words *real man of honour*,—

“ Le voilà, Monsieur ! le voilà ? ” and gave himself such a blow on the breast as convinced me the French are a brave people.

He told us that nothing but his honour was left him, but that it supplied the place of all he had lost. It was discovered some time afterward that M. Dubois had been guilty of perjury, had been a spy, and had lost nothing but a dozen or two of tin patty-pans, hereditary in his family, his father having been a cook on his own account.

William, it is well at thy time of life that thou shouldst know the customs of far countries, particularly if it should be the will of God to place thee in a company of players. Of all nations in the world, the French best understand the stage. If thou shouldst ever write for it, which God forbid, copy them very carefully. Murders on their stage are quite decorous and cleanly. Few gentlemen and ladies die by violence who would not have died by exhaustion. For they rant and rave until their voice fails them, one after another; and those who do not die of it die consumptive. They cannot bear to see cruelty; they would rather see any image than their own. These are not my observations, but were made by Sir Everard Starkeye, who likewise did remark to Monsieur Dubois, that "cats, if you hold them up to the looking-glass, will scratch you terribly; and that the same fierce animal, as if proud of its cleanly coat and velvety paw, doth carefully put aside what other animals of more estimation take no trouble to conceal."

"Our people," said Sir Everard, "must see upon the stage what they never could have imagined; so the best men in the world would earnestly take a peep of hell through a chink, whereas the worser would skulk away."

Do not thou be their caterer, William! Avoid the writing of comedies and tragedies. To make people laugh is uncivil, and to make people cry is unkind. And what, after all, are these comedies and these tragedies? They are what, for the benefit of all future generations, I have myself described them,—

"The whimsies of wantons and stories of dread,
That make the stout-hearted look under the bed."

Furthermore, let me warn thee against the same on account of the vast charges thou must stand at. We Englishmen cannot find it in our hearts to murder a man without much difficulty,

hesitation, and delay. We have little or no invention for pains and penalties ; it is only our acutest lawyers who have wit enough to frame them. Therefore it behooveth your tragedy-man to provide a rich assortment of them, in order to strike the auditor with awe and wonder. And a tragedy-man, in our country, who cannot afford a fair dozen of stabbed males, and a trifle under that mark of poisoned females, and chains enow to moor a whole navy in dock, is but a scurvy fellow at the best. Thou wilt find trouble in purveying these necessities ; and then must come the gim-cracks for the second course,—gods, goddesses, fates, furies, battles, marriages, music, and the maypole. Hast thou within thee wherewithal ?

“ Sir ! ” replied Billy, with great modesty, “ I am most grateful for these ripe fruits of your experience. To admit delightful visions into my own twilight chamber is not dangerous nor forbidden. Believe me, sir, he who indulges in them will abstain from injuring his neighbour ; he will see no glory in peril, and no delight in strife.

The world shall never be troubled by any battles and marriages of mine, and I desire no other music and no other maypole than have lightened my heart at Stratford.”

Sir Thomas, finding him well-conditioned and manageable, proceeded :

“ Although I have admonished thee of sundry and insurmountable impediments, yet more are lying in the pathway. We have no verse for tragedy. One in his hurry hath dropped rhyme, and walketh like unto the man who wanteth the left-leg stocking. Others can give us rhyme indeed, but can hold no longer after the tenth or eleventh syllable. Now Sir Everard Starkeye, who is a pretty poet, did confess to Monsieur Dubois the potency of the French tragic verse, which thou never canst hope to bring over.

“ ‘ I wonder, Monsieur Dubois ! ’ said Sir Everard, ‘ that your countrymen should have thought it necessary to transport their heavy artillery into Italy. No Italian could stand a volley of your heroic verses from the best and biggest pieces. With these brought into action, you never could have lost the battle of Pavia.’

Now my friend Sir Everard is not quite so good a historian as he is a poet ; and Monsieur Dubois took advantage of him.

‘Pardon ! Monsieur Sir Everard !’ said Monsieur Dubois, smiling at my friend’s slip, ‘We did not lose the battle of Pavia. We had the misfortune to lose our king, who delivered himself up, as our kings always do, for the good and glory of his country.’

‘How was this ?’ said Sir Everard, in surprise.

‘I will tell you, Monsieur Sir Everard !’ said Monsieur Dubois. ‘I had it from my own father, who fought in the battle, and told my mother, word for word.

‘The king seeing his household troops, being only one thousand strong, surrounded by twelve regiments, the best Spanish troops, amounting to eighteen thousand four hundred and forty-two, although he doubted not of victory, yet thought he might lose many brave men before the close of the day, and rode up instantly to King Charles, and said,

‘My brother ! I am loath to lose so many of those brave men yonder. Whistle off your Spanish pointers, and I agree to ride home with you.’

‘And so he did. But what did King Charles ? Abusing French loyalty, he made our Francis his prisoner, would you believe it ? and treated him worse than ever badger was treated at the bottom of any paltry stable-yard, putting upon his table beer and Rhenish wine and wild boar.’

‘I have digressed with thee, young man,’ continued the knight, much to the improvement of my knowledge, I do reverentially confess, as it was of the lad’s. ‘We will now,’ said he, ‘endeavour our best to sober thee, finding that Dr Glaston hath omitted it.’

‘Not entirely omitted it,’ said William, gratefully ; ‘he did after dinner all that could be done at such a time toward it. The doctor could, however, speak only of the Greeks and Romans, and certainly what he said of them gave me but little encouragement.’

Sir Thomas. What said he ?

Shakspeare. He said, ‘The Greeks conveyed all their wisdom into their theatre,—their stages were churches and

parliament-houses ; but what was false prevailed over what was true. They had their own wisdom, the wisdom of the foolish. Who is Sophocles, if compared to Doctor Hammersley of Oriel ? or Euripides, if compared to Doctor Prichard of Jesus ? Without the Gospel, light is darkness ; and with it, children are giants.

“ William, I need not expatiate on Greek with thee, since thou knowest it not, but some crumbs of Latin are picked up by the callowest beaks. The Romans had, as thou findest, and have still, more taste for murder than morality, and, as they could not find heroes among them, looked for gladiators. Their only very high poet employed his elevation and strength to dethrone and debase the Deity. They had several others, who polished their language and pitched their instruments with admirable skill ; several who glued over their thin and flimsy gaberdines many bright feathers from the widespread downs of Ionia, and the richly cultivated rocks of Attica.

“ Some of them have spoken from inspiration ; for thou art not to suppose that from the 'heathen' were withheld all the manifestations of the Lord. We do agree at Oxford that the Pollio of Virgil is our Saviour. True, it is the dullest and poorest poem that a nation not very poetical hath bequeathed unto us ; and even the versification, in which this master excelled, is wanting in fluency and sweetness. I can only account for it from the weight of the subject. Two verses, which are fairly worth two hundred such poems, are from another pagan ; he was forced to sigh for the church without knowing her. He saith,

May I gaze upon thee when my latest hour is come !
May I hold thy hand when mine faileth me !

This, if adumbrating the church, is the most beautiful thought that ever issued from the heart of man ; but if addressed to a wanton, as some do opine, is filth from the sink, nauseating and insufferable.

“ William ! that which moveth the heart most is the best poetry ! it comes nearest unto God, the source of all power.”

Sir Thomas. Yea ; and he appeareth unto me to know more of poetry than of divinity. Those ancients have little

flesh upon the body poetical, and lack the savour that sufficeth. The Song of Solomon drowns all their voices: they seem but whistlers and guitar-players compared to a full-cheeked trumpeter; they standing under the eaves in some dark lane, he upon a well-caparisoned stallion, tossing his mane and all his ribbons to the sun. I doubt the doctor spake too fondly of the Greeks; they were giddy creatures. William, I am loath to be hard on them; but they please me not. There are those now living who could make them bite their nails to the quick, and turn green as grass with envy.

Shakspeare. Sir, one of those Greeks, methinks, thrown into the pickle-pot, would be a treasure to the housewife's young gherkins.¹⁴

Sir Thomas. Simpleton! simpleton! but thou valuest them justly. Now attend. If ever thou shouldst hear, at Oxford or London, the verses I am about to repeat, prithee do not communicate them to that fiery spirit Mat Atterend. It might not be the battle of two hundreds, but two counties; a sort of York and Lancaster war, whereof I would wash my hands. Listen!

. . . And now did Sir Thomas clear his voice, always high and sonorous, and did repeat from the stores of his memory these rich and proud verses,—

“ ‘Chloe! mean men must ever make mean loves;
They deal in dog-roses, but I in cloves.
They are just scorch’d enough to blow their fingers;
I am a phoenix downright burnt to cinders.’ ”

At which noble conceits, so far above what poor' Bill had ever imagined, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and exclaimed,

“ The world itself must be reduced to that condition before such glorious verses die? *Chloe* and *Clove*! Why, sir! Chloe wants but a V toward the tail to become the very thing! Never tell me that such matters can come about of themselves. And how truly is it said that we mean men deal in dog-roses!

Sir, if it were permitted me to swear on that holy Bible, I would swear I never until this day heard that dog-roses were

[¹⁴ First ed. reads: “jerkins.”]

our provender ; and yet did I, no longer ago than last summer, write, not indeed upon a dog-rose, but upon a sweet-briar, what would only serve to rinse the mouth withal after the clove."

Sir Thomas. Repeat the same, youth. We may haply give thee our counsel thereupon.

. . . Willy took heart, and lowering his voice, which hath much natural mellowness, repeated these from memory :

" My briar that smeldest sweet
 When gentle spring's first heat
 Ran through thy quiet veins,—
 Thou that wouldest injure none,
 But wouldest be left alone,
 Alone thou leavest me, and nought of thine remains.

What ! hath no poet's lyre
 O'er thee, sweet-breathing briar,
 Hung fondly, ill or well ?
 And yet methinks with thee
 A poet's sympathy,
 Whether in weal or woe, in life or death, might dwell.

Hard usage both must bear,
 Few hands your youth will rear,
 Few bosoms cherish you ;
 Your tender prime must bleed
 Ere you are sweet, but freed
 From life, you then are prized ; thus prized are poets too."

Sir Thomas said, with kind encouragement, " He who beginneth so discreetly with a dog-rose, may hope to encompass a damask-rose ere he die."

Willy did now breathe freely. The commendation of a knight and magistrate worked powerfully within him ; and Sir Thomas said furthermore,

" These short matters do not suit me. Thou mightest have added some moral about life and beauty : poets never handle roses without one ; but thou art young, and mayest get into the train."

Willy made the best excuse he could ; and no bad one it was, the knight acknowledged ; namely, that the sweet-briar was not really dead, although left for dead.

“Then,” said Sir Thomas, “as life and beauty would not serve thy turn, thou mightest have had full enjoyment of the beggar, the wayside, the thieves, and the good Samaritan; enough to tapestry the bridal chamber of an empress.”

William bowed respectfully, and sighed.

“Ha! thou hast lost them, sure enough, and it may not be quite so fair to smile at thy quandary,” quoth Sir Thomas.

“I did my best the first time,” said Willy, “and fell short the second.”

“That, indeed, thou must have done,” said Sir Thomas. “It is a grievous disappointment, in the midst of our lamentations for the dead, to find ourselves balked. I am curious to see how thou couldst help thyself. Don’t be abashed; I am ready for even worse than the last.”

Bill hesitated, but obeyed :

And art thou yet alive?
And shall the happy hive
Send out her youth to cull
Thy sweets of leaf and flower,
And spend the sunny hour

With thee, and thy faint heart with murmuring music lull?

Tell me what tender care,
Tell me what pious prayer,
Bade thee arise and live.
The fondest-favoured bee
Shall whisper nought to thee.

More loving than the song my grateful muse shall give.

Sir Thomas looked somewhat less pleased at the conclusion of these verses than at the conclusion of the former, and said, gravely,

“Young man! methinks it is betimes that thou talkest of having a muse to thyself; or even in common with others. It is only great poets who have muses; I mean to say who have the right to talk in that fashion. The French, I hear, *Phæbus* it and *muse-me* it right and left; and boggle not to throw all nine, together with mother and master, into the compass of a dozen lines or thereabout. And your Italian can hardly do without ‘em in the multiplication-table. We Englishmen do let them in quietly, shut the door, and say nothing of what

passes. I have read a whole book of comedies, and ne'er a muse to help the lamest."

Shakspeare. Wonderful forbearance! I marvel how the poet could get through.

Sir Thomas. By God's help. And I think we did as well without 'em; for it must be an unabashable man that ever shook his sides in their company. They lay heavy restraint both upon laughing and crying. In the great master Virgil of Rome, they tell me they come in to count the ships, and having cast up the sum total, and proved it, make off again. Sure token of two things,—first, that he held 'em dog-cheap; secondly, that he had made but little progress (for a Lombard born) in book-keeping at double entry.

He, and every other great genius, began with small subject-matters, gnats and the like. I myself, similar unto him, wrote upon fruit. I would give thee some copies for thy copying, if I thought thou wouldest use them temperately, and not render them common, as hath befallen the poetry of some among the brightest geniuses. I could shew thee how to say new things, and how to time the same. Before my day, nearly all the flowers and fruits had been gathered by poets, old and young, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall; roses went up to Solomon, apples to Adam, and so forth.

Willy! my brave lad! I was the first that ever handled a quince, I'll be sworn.

Hearken!

“Chloe! I would not have thee wince,
That I unto thee send a quince.
I would not have thee say unto 't
Begone! and trample 't underfoot,
For, trust me, 'tis no fulsome fruit.
It came not out of mine own garden,
But all the way from Henly in Arden,
Of an uncommon fine old tree,
Belonging to John Asbury.
And if that of it thou shalt eat,
'Twill make thy breath e'en yet more sweet;
As a translation here doth shew,
On fruit-trees, by Jean Mirabeau.
The frontispiece is printed so.

But eat it with some wine and cake,
Or it may give the belly-ache.*
This doth my worthy clerk indite,
I sign,

SIR THOMAS LUCY, Knight."

Now, Willy, there is not one poet or lover in twenty who careth for consequences. Many hint to the lady what to do, few what not to do ; although it would oftentimes, as in this case, go to one's heart to see the upshot.

“ Ah, sir,” said Bill, in all humility, “ I would make bold to put the parings of that quince under my pillow, for sweet dreams and insights, if Doctor Glaston had given me encouragement to continue the pursuit of poetry. Of a surety it would bless me with a bedful of churches and' crucifixions, duly adumbrated.”

Whereat Sir Thomas, shaking his head, did inform him,

“ It was in the golden age of the world, as pagans call it, that poets of condition sent fruits and flowers to their beloved, with posies fairly penned. We, in our days, have done the like. But manners of late are much corrupted on the one side, if not on both.

Willy ! it hath been whispered that there be those who would rather have a piece of brocade or velvet for a stomacher than the touchingest copy of verses, with a bleeding heart at the bottom.”

Shakspeare. Incredible !

Sir Thomas. 'Tis even so !

Shakspeare. They must surely be rotten fragments of the world before the flood,—saved out of it by the devil.

Sir Thomas. I am not of that mind.

Their eyes, mayhap, fell upon some of the bravery cast ashore from the Spanish Armada. In ancienter days, a few pages of good poetry outvalued a whole ell of the finest Genoa.

Shakspeare. When will such days return ?

* *Belly-ache*, a disorder once not uncommon in England. Even the name is now almost forgotten ; yet the elder of us may remember at least the report of it, and some, perhaps, even the complaint itself, in our school-days. It usually broke out about the cherry season ; and in some cases made its appearance again at the first nutting.

Sir Thomas. It is only within these few years that corruption and avarice have made such ghastly strides. They always did exist, but were gentler.

My youth is waning, and has been nigh upon these seven years, I being now in my forty-eighth.

Shakspeare. I have understood that the god of poetry is in the enjoyment of eternal youth; I was ignorant that his sons were.

Sir Thomas. No, child! we are hale and comely, but must go the way of all flesh.

Shakspeare. Must it, can it, be?

Sir Thomas. Time was, my smallest gifts were acceptable, as thus recorded :

From my fair hand, O will ye, will ye
 Deign humbly to accept a gilly-
 Flower for thy bosom, sugared maid!
 Scarce had I said it ere she took it,
 And in a twinkling, faith! had stuck it,
 Where e'en proud knighthood might have laid.

. . . William was now quite unable to contain himself, and seemed utterly to have forgotten the grievous charge against him; to such a pitch did his joy o'erleap his jeopardy.

Master Silas in the meantime was much disquieted; and first did he strip away all the white feather from every pen in the ink-pot, and then did he mend them, one and all, and then did he slit them with his thumb-nail, and then did he pare and slash away at them again, and then did he cut off the tops, until at last he left upon them neither nib nor plume, nor enough of the middle to serve as quill to a virginal. It went to my heart to see such a power of pens so wasted; there could not be fewer than five. Sir Thomas was less wary than usual, being overjoyed. For great poets do mightily affect to have little poets under them; and little poets do forget themselves in great company, as fiddlers do, who *hail fellow well met* even with lords.

Sir Thomas did not interrupt our Bill's wild gladness. I never thought so worshipful a personage could bear so much. At last he said unto the lad :

“ I do bethink me, if thou hearest much more of my poetry, and the success attendant thereon, good Doctor Glaston

would tear thy skirt off ere he could drag thee back from the occupation."

Shakspeare. I fear me, for once, all his wisdom would sluice out in vain.

Sir Thomas. It was reported to me that when our virgin queen's highness (her Dear Dread's* ear not being then poisoned) heard these verses, she said before her courtiers, to the sore travail of some, and heart's content of others,—

" We need not envy our young cousin James of Scotland his ass's bite of a thistle, having such flowers as these gilly-flowers on the chimney-stacks of Charlecote."

I could have told her highness that all this poetry, from beginning to end, was real matter of fact, well and truly spoken by mine own self. I had only to harness the rhymes thereunto, at my leisure.

Shakspeare. None could ever doubt it. Greeks and Trojans may fight for the quince; neither shall have it

While a Warwickshire lad
Is on earth to be had,
With a wand to wag
On a trusty nag,
He shall keep the lists
With cudgel or fists.
And black shall be whose eye
Looks evil on Lucy.

Sir Thomas. Nay, nay, nay! do not trespass too soon upon heroics. Thou seest thou canst not hold thy wind beyond eight lines. What wouldst thou do under the heavy mettle that should have wrought such wonders at Pavia, if thou findest these petards so troublesome in discharging? Surely, the good doctor, had he entered at large on the subject, would have been very particular in urging this expostulation.

Shakspeare. Sir, to my mortification I must confess that I took to myself the counsel he was giving to another; a young gentleman who, from his pale face, his abstinence at table, his cough, his taciturnity, and his gentleness, seemed already more than half poet. To him did Doctor Glaston urge, with all his zeal and judgment, many arguments against the vocation;

* Sir Thomas borrowed this expression from Spenser.

telling him that, even in college, he had few applauders, being the first, and not the second or third, who always are more fortunate ; reminding him that he must solicit and obtain much interest with men of rank and quality, before he could expect their favour ; and that without it the vein chilled, the nerve relaxed, and the poet was left at next door to the bellman. "In the coldness of the world," said he, "in the absence of ready friends and adherents, to light thee upstairs to the richly tapestried chamber of the muses, thy spirits will abandon thee, thy heart will sicken and swell within thee : overladen, thou wilt make, O Ethelbert ! a slow and painful progress, and ere the door open, sink. Praise giveth weight unto the wanting, and happiness giveth elasticity unto the heavy. As the mightiest streams of the unexplored world, America, run languidly in the night,* and await the sun on high to contend with him in strength and grandeur, so doth genius halt and pause in the thraldom of out-spread darkness, and move onward with all his vigour then only when creative light and jubilant warmth surround him."

Ethelbert coughed faintly ; a tinge of red, the size of a rose-bud, coloured the middle of his cheek ; and yet he seemed not to be pained by the reproof. He look fondly and affectionately at his teacher, who thus proceeded :

" My dear youth, do not carry the stone of Sisyphus on thy shoulder to pave the way to disappointment. If thou writest but indifferent poetry none will envy thee, and some will praise thee ; but nature, in her malignity, hath denied unto thee a capacity for the enjoyment of such praise. In this she hath been kinder to most others than to thee ; we know wherein she hath been kinder to thee than to most others. If thou writest good poetry many will call it flat, many will call it obscure, many will call it inharmonious ; and some of these will speak as they think ; for, as in giving a feast to great numbers, it is easier to possess the wine than to procure the cups, so happens it in poetry ; thou hast the beverage of thy own growth, but canst not find the recipients. What is simple and elegant to thee and me, to many an honest man is

* Humboldt notices this.

flat and sterile ; what to us is an innocently sly allusion, to as worthy a one as either of us in dull obscurity ; and that moreover which swims upon our brain, and which throbs against our temples, and which we delight in sounding to ourselves when the voice has done with it, touches their ear, and awakens no harmony in any cell of it. Rivals will run up to thee and call thee a plagiary, and, rather than that proof should be wanting, similar words to some of thine will be thrown in thy teeth out of Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

“ Do you desire calm studies ? Do you desire high thoughts ? Penetrate into theology. What is nobler than to dissect and discern the opinions of the gravest men upon the subtlest matters ? And what glorious victories are those over Infidelity and Scepticism ! How much loftier, how much more lasting in their effects, than such as ye are invited unto by what this ingenious youth hath contemptuously and truly called

‘ The swaggering drum, and trumpet hoarse with rage.’

And what a delightful and edifying sight it is, to see hundreds of the most able doctors, all stripped for the combat, each closing with his antagonist, and tugging and tearing, tooth and nail, to lay down and establish truths which have been floating in the air for ages, and which the lower order of mortals are forbidden to see, and commanded to embrace. And then the shouts of victory ! And then the crowns of amaranth held over their heads by the applauding angels ! Besides, these combats have other great and distinct advantages. Whereras, in the carnal, the longer ye contend the more blows do ye receive ; in these against Satan, the more fiercely and pertinaciously ye drive at him, the slacker do ye find him ; every good hit makes him redden and rave with anger, but diminishes its effect.

“ My dear friends, who would not enter a service in which he may give blows to his mortal enemy, and receive none ; and in which not only the eternal gain is incalculable, but also the temporal, at four-and-twenty, may be far above the emolument of generals, who, before the priest was born, had bled profusely for their country, established her security, brightened her glory, and augmented her dominions ? ”

. . . At this pause did Sir Thomas turn unto Sir Silas, and asked,—

“ What sayest thou, Silas ? ”

Whereupon did Sir Silas make answer,

“ I say it is so, and was so, and should be so, and shall be so. If the queen’s brother had not sopped the priests and bishops out of the Catholic cup, they could have held the Catholic cup in their own hands, instead of yielding it into his. They earned their money ; if they sold their consciences for it, the business is theirs, not ours. I call this facing the devil with a vengeance. We have their coats ; no matter who made ‘em ; we have ‘em, I say, and we will wear ‘em ; and not a button, tag, or tassel, shall any man tear away.”

Sir Thomas then turned to Willy, and requested him to proceed with the doctor’s discourse, who thereupon continued :

“ ‘ Within your own recollections, how many good, quiet, inoffensive men, unendowed with any extraordinary abilities, have been enabled, by means of divinity, to enjoy a long life in tranquillity and affluence ? ’

“ Whereupon did one of the young gentlemen smile, and, on small encouragement from Doctor Glaston to enounce the cause thereof, he repeated these verses, which he gave afterward unto me.

“ ‘ In the names on our books
Was standing Tom Flooke’s,
Who took in due time his degrees ;
Which when he had taken,
Like Ascham or Bacon,
By night he could snore and by day he could sneeze.

“ ‘ Calm, pithy, pragmatical,*
Tom Flooke he could at a call
Rise up like a hound from his sleep ;
And if many a quarto
He gave not his heart to,
If pellucid in lore, in his cups he was deep.

“ ‘ He never did harm,
And his heart might be warm,
For his doublet most certainly was so ;

* *Pragmatical* here means only *precise*.

And now has Tom Flooke
 A quieter nook
 Than ever had Spenser or Tasso.

“ ‘ He lives in his house,
 As still as a mouse,
 Until he has eaten his dinner ;
 But then doth his nose
 Outroar all the woes
 That encompass the death of a sinner.

“ ‘ And there oft has been seen
 No less than a dean
 To tarry a week in the parish,
 In October and March,
 When deans are less starch,
 And days are less gleamy and garish.

“ ‘ That Sunday Tom’s eyes
 Look’d always more wise,
 He repeated more often his text ;
 Two leaves stuck together
 (The fault of the weather)
 And . . . *the rest ye shall hear in my next.*

“ ‘ At mess he lost quite
 His small appetite,
 By losing his friend the good dean ;
 The cook’s sight must fail her !
 The eggs sure are staler !
 The beef, too ! Why, what can it mean ?

“ ‘ He turned off the butcher,
 To the cook could he clutch her,
 What his choler had done there’s no saying—
 ‘Tis verily said
 He smote low the cock’s head,
 And took other pullets for laying.’

“ On this being concluded, Doctor Glaston said he shrewdly suspected an indigestion on the part of Mr Thomas Flooke, caused by sitting up late and studying hard with Mr Dean ; and he protested that theology itself should not carry us into the rawness of the morning air, particularly in such critical months as March and October, in one of which the sap rises, in the other sinks, and there are many stars very sinister.”

. . . Sir Thomas shook his head, and declared he would not be uncharitable to rector, or dean, or doctor, but that certain surmises swam uppermost. He then winked at Master Silas, who said, incontinently,

“ You have it, Sir Thomas! The blind buzzards! with their stars and saps!”

“ Well, but Silas! you yourself have told us over and over again, in church, that there are *arcana*.”

“ So there are; I uphold it,” replied Master Silas; “ but a fig for the greater part, and a fig-leaf for the rest. As for these signs, they are as plain as any page in the Revelations.”

Sir Thomas, after short pondering, said, scoffingly,

“ In regard to the rawness of the air having any effect whatsoever on those who discourse orthodoxy on theology, it is quite as absurd as to imagine that a man ever caught cold in a Protestant church. I am rather of opinion that it was a judgment on the rector for his evil-mindedness toward the cook, the Lord foreknowing that he was about to be wilful and vengeful in that quarter. It was, however, more advisedly that he took other pullets, on his own view of the case, although it might be that the same pullets would suit him again as well as ever, when his appetite should return; for it doth not appear that they were loath to lay, but laid somewhat unsatisfactorily.

“ Now, youth,” continued his worship, “ if in our clemency we should spare thy life, study this higher elegiacal strain which thou hast carried with thee from Oxford; it containeth, over and above an unusual store of biography, much sound moral doctrine, for those who are heedful in the weighing of it. And what can be more affecting than,

‘ At mess he lost quite
His small appetite,
By losing his friend the good dean’?

And what an insight into character! Store it up; store it up! *Small appetite*, particular; *good dean*, generick.”

Hereupon did Master Silas jerk me with his indicative joint, the elbow to wit, and did say in my ear,

“ He means *deanery*. Give me one of those bones so full

of marrow, and let my lord bishop have all the meat over it, and welcome. If a dean is not on his stilts, he is not on his stumps ; he stands on his own ground ; he is a *noli-metangere-tarian*."

"What art thou saying of those sectaries, good Master Silas ?" quoth Sir Thomas, not hearing him distinctly.

"I was talking of the dean," replied Master Silas. "He was the very dean who wrote and sang that song called the *Two Jacks*."

"Hast it ?" asked he.

Master Silas shook his head, and, trying in vain to recollect it, said at last,

"After dinner it sometimes pops out of a filbert-shell in a crack ; and I have known it float on the first glass of Herefordshire cider ; it also hath some affinity with very stiff and old bottled beer ; but in a morning it seemeth unto me like a remnant of over-night."

"Our memory waneth, Master Silas !" quoth Sir Thomas, looking seriously. "If thou couldst repeat it, without the grimace of singing, it were not ill."

Master Silas struck the table with his fist, and repeated the first stave angrily ; but in the second he forgot the admonition of Sir Thomas, and did sing outright,

"Jack Calvin and Jack Cade,
Two gentles of one trade,
Two tinkers,
Very gladly would pull down
Mother Church and Father Crown,
And would starve or would drown
Right thinkers.

"Honest man ! honest man !
Fill the can, fill the can,
They are coming ! they are coming ! they are coming !
If any drop be left,
It might tempt 'em to a theft . . .
Zooks ! it was only the ale that was humming."

"In the first stave, gramercy ! there is an awful verity," quoth Sir Thomas ; "but I wonder that a dean should let his skewer slip out, and his fat catch fire so wofully, in the second. Light stuff, Silas, fit only for ale-houses."

Master Silas was nettled in the nose, and answered,

“ Let me see the man in Warwickshire, and in all the counties round, who can run at such a rate with so light a feather in the palm of his hand. I am no poet, thank God ! but I know what folks can do, and what folks cannot do.”

“ Well, Silas,” replied Sir Thomas, “ after thy thanksgiving for being no poet, let us have the rest of the piece.”

“ The rest ! ” quoth Master Silas. “ When the ale hath done with its humming, it is time, methinks, to dismiss it. Sir, there never was any more ; you might as well ask for more after Amen or the see of Canterbury.”

Sir Thomas was dissatisfied, and turned off the discourse ; and peradventure he grew more inclined to be gracious unto Willy from the slight rub his chaplain had given him, were it only for the contrariety. When he had collected his thoughts he was determined to assert his supremacy on the score of poetry.

“ Deans, I perceive, like other quality,” said he, “ cannot run on long together. My friend, Sir Everard Starkeye, could never overleap four bars. I remember but one composition of his, on a young lady who mocked at his inconsistency, in calling her sometimes his Grace and at other times his Muse.

‘ My Grace shall Fanny Carew be,
While here she deigns to stay ;
And (ah, how sad the change for me !)
My Muse when far away ! ’

And when we laughed at him for turning his back upon her after the fourth verse, all he could say for himself was, that he would rather a game at *all fours* with Fanny, than *ombre* and *picquet* with the finest furbelows in Christendom. Men of condition do usually want a belt in the course.”

Whereunto said Master Silas,

“ Men out of condition are quite as liable to lack it, methinks.”

“ Silas ! Silas ! ” replied the knight, impatiently, “ prithee keep to thy divinity, thy strong hold upon Zion ; thence none that faces thee can draw thee without being bitten to the bone. Leave poetry to me.”

"With all my heart," quoth Master Silas, "I will never ask a belt from her, until I see she can afford to give a shirt. She has promised a belt, indeed,—not one, however, that doth much improve the wind,—to this lad here, and will keep her word; but she was forced to borrow the pattern from a Carthusian friar, and somehow it slips above the shoulder."

"I am by no means sure of that," quoth Sir Thomas. "He shall have fair play. He carrieth in his mind many valuable things, whereof it hath pleased Providence to ordain him the depository. He hath laid before us certain sprigs of poetry from Oxford, trim as pennyroyal, and larger leaves of household divinity, the most mildly-savoured; pleasant in health and wholesome in sickness."

"I relish not such mutton-broth divinity," said Master Silas. "It makes me sick in order to settle my stomach."

"We may improve it," said the knight, "but first let us hear more."

Then did William Shakspeare resume Dr Glaston's discourse.

"'Ethelbert! I think thou walkest but little; otherwise I should take thee with me, some fine fresh morning, as far as unto the first hamlet on the Cherwell. There lies young Wellerby, who, the year before, was wont to pass many hours of the day poetising amid the ruins of Godstow nunnery. It is said that he bore a fondness toward a young maiden in that place, formerly a village, now containing but two old farm-houses. In my memory there were still extant several dormitories. Some love-sick girl had recollect'd an ancient name, and had engraven on a stone with a garden-nail, which lay in rust near it,

POORE ROSAMUND.

I entered these precincts, and beheld a youth of manly form and countenance, washing and wiping a stone with a handful of wet grass; and on my going up to him, and asking what he had found, he shewed it to me. The next time I saw him was near the banks of the Cherwell. He had tried, it appears, to forget or overcome his foolish passion, and had applied his whole mind unto study. He was foiled by his

competitor ; and now he sought consolation in poetry. Whether this opened the wounds that had closed in his youthful breast, and malignant Love, in his revenge, poisoned it ; or whether the disappointment he had experienced in finding others preferred to him, first in the paths of fortune, then in those of the muses ; he was thought to have died broken-hearted.

“ ‘ About half a mile from St John’s College is the termination of a natural terrace, with the Cherwell close under it, in some places bright with yellow and red flowers glancing and glowing through the stream, and suddenly in others dark with the shadows of many different trees, in broad, overbending thickets, and with rushes spear-high, and party-coloured flags.

“ ‘ After a walk in Midsummer, the emersion of our hands into the cool and closing grass is surely not the least among our animal delights. I was just seated, and the first sensation of rest vibrated in me gently, as though it were music to the limbs, when I discovered by a hollow in the herbage that another was near. The long meadow-sweet and blooming burnet half concealed from me him whom the earth was about to hide totally and for ever.

“ ‘ Master Bachelor,’ said I, ‘ it is ill-sleeping by the water-side.’

“ ‘ No answer was returned. I arose, went to the place, and recognised poor Wellerby. His brow was moist, his cheek was warm. A few moments earlier, and that dismal lake whereunto and wherefrom the waters of life, the buoyant blood, ran no longer, might have received one vivifying ray reflected from my poor casement. I might not indeed have comforted ; I have often failed ; but there is one who never has ; and the strengthener of the bruised reed should have been with us.

“ ‘ Remembering that his mother did abide one mile further on, I walked forward to the mansion, and asked her what tidings she lately had received of her son. She replied that, having given up his mind to light studies, the fellows of the college would not elect him. The master had warned him beforehand to abandon his selfish poetry, take up manfully the quarterstaff of logic, and wield it for St John’s, come who

would into the ring. "We want our man," said he to me, "and your son hath failed us in the hour of need. Madam, he hath been foully beaten in the schools by one he might have swallowed, with due exercise."

""I rated him, told him I was poor, and he knew it. He was stung, and threw himself upon my neck, and wept. Twelve days have passed since, and only three rainy ones. I hear he has been seen upon the knoll yonder; but hither he hath not come. I trust he knows at last the value of time, and I shall be heartily glad to see him after this accession of knowledge. Twelve days, it is true, are rather a chink than a gap in time; yet, O gentle sir, they are that chink which makes the vase quite valueless. There are light words which may never be shaken off the mind they fall on. My child, who was hurt by me, will not let me see the marks."

""Lady," said I, "none are left upon him. Be comforted! thou shalt see him this hour. All that thy God hath not taken is yet thine." She looked at me earnestly, and would have then asked something, but her voice failed her. There was no agony, no motion, save in the lips and cheeks. Being the widow of one who fought under Hawkins, she remembered his courage and sustained the shock, saying calmly, "God's will be done! I pray that he find me as worthy as he findeth me willing to join them."

"Now, in her unearthly thoughts she had led her only son to the bosom of her husband; and in her spirit (which often is permitted to pass the gates of death with holy love) she left them both with their Creator.

"The curate of the village sent those who should bring home the body; and some days afterward he came unto me, beseeching me to write the epitaph. Being no friend to stone-cutters' charges, I entered not into biography, but wrote these few words:

JOANNES WELLERBY,

LITERARUM QUÆSIVIT GLORIAM,

VIDET DEI."

“Poor tack! poor tack!” sourly quoth Master Silas. “If your wise doctor could say nothing more about the fool, who died like a rotten sheep among the darnels, his Latin might have held out for the father, and might have told people he was as cool as a cucumber at home, and as hot as pepper in battle. Could he not find room enough on the whinstone, to tell the folks of the village how he played the devil among the dons, burning their fingers when they would put thumbscrews upon us, punching them in the weasand as a blacksmith punches a horse-shoe, and throwing them overboard like bilgewater?

“Has Oxford lost all her Latin? Here is no *capitani filius*; no more mention of family than a Welshman would have allowed him; no *hic jacet*; and, worse than all, the devil a tittle of *spe redemptionis*, or *anno Domini*.”

“Willy!” quoth Sir Thomas, “I shrewdly do suspect there was more, and that thou hast forgotten it.”

“Sir!” answered Willy, “I wrote not down the words, fearing to mis-spell them, and begged them of the doctor, when I took my leave of him on the morrow; and verily he wrote down all he had repeated. I keep them always in the tin-box in my waistcoat-pocket, among the eel-hooks, on a scrap of paper a finger’s length and breadth, folded in the middle to fit. And when the eels are running, I often take it out and read it before I am aware. I could as soon forget my own epitaph as this.”

“Simpleton!” said Sir Thomas, with his gentle, compassionate smile; “but thou hast cleared thyself.”

Sir Silas. I think the doctor gave one idle chap as much solid pudding as he could digest, with a slice to spare for another.

Shakspeare. And yet after this pudding the doctor gave him a spoonful of custard, flavoured with a little bitter, which was mostly left at the bottom for the other idle chap.

. . . Sir Thomas not only did endure this very goodnaturedly, but deigned even to take in good part the smile upon my countenance, as though he were a smile collector, and as though his estate were so humble that he could hold his laced bonnet (in all his bravery) for bear and fiddle.

He then said unto Willy,

“ Place likewise this custard before us.”

“ There is but little of it ; the platter is shallow,” replied he ; “ 'twas suited to Master Ethelbert's appetite. The contents were these :

“ The things whereon thy whole soul brooded in its innermost recesses, and with all its warmth and energy, will pass unprized and unregarded, not only throughout thy lifetime but long after. For the higher beauties of poetry are beyond the capacity, beyond the vision of almost all. Once perhaps in half a century a single star is discovered, then named and registered, then mentioned by five studious men to five more ; at last some twenty say, or repeat in writing, what they have heard about it. Other stars await other discoveries. Few and solitary and wide asunder are those who calculate their relative distances, their mysterious influences, their glorious magnitude, and their stupendous height. 'Tis so, believe me, and ever was so, with the truest and best poetry. Homer, they say, was blind ; he might have been ere he died,—that he sat among the blind, we are sure.

“ Happy they who, like this young lad from Stratford, write poetry on the saddle-bow when their geldings are jaded, and keep the desk for better purposes.”

“ The young gentlemen, like the elderly, all turned their faces toward me, to my confusion, so much did I remark of sneer and scoff at my cost. Master Ethelbert was the only one who spared me. He smiled and said,

“ Be patient ! From the higher heavens of poetry, it is long before the radiance of the brightest star can reach the world below. We hear that one man finds out one beauty, another man finds out another, placing his observatory and instruments on the poet's grave. The worms must have eaten us before it is rightly known what we are. It is only when we are skeletons that we are boxed and ticketed, and prized and shewn. Be it so ! I shall not be tired of waiting.”

“ Reasonable youth ?” said Sir Thomas ; “ yet both he and Glaston walk rather *a-straddle*, methinks. They might have stepped up to thee more straightforwardly, and told thee the trade ill suiteth thee, having little fire, little fantasy, and little

learning. Furthermore, that one poet, as one bull, sufficeth for two parishes, and that where they are stuck too close together they are apt to fire, like haystacks. I have known it myself ; I have had my malignants and scoffers."

Shakspeare. I never could have thought it !

Sir Thomas. There again ! Another proof of thy inexperience.

Shakspeare. Mat Atterend ! Mat Atterend ! where wert thou sleeping ?

Sir Thomas. I shall now from my own stores impart unto thee what will avail to tame thee, shewing the utter hopelessness of standing on that golden weathercock which supporteth but one at a time.

The passion for poetry wherewith Monsieur Dubois would have inspired me, as he was bound to do, being paid beforehand, had cold water thrown upon it by that unlucky one, Sir Everard. He ridiculed the idea of male and female rhymes, and the necessity of trying them as rigidly by the eye as by the ear ; saying to Monsieur Dubois that the palate, in which the French excel all mortals, ought also to be consulted in their acceptance or rejection. Monsieur Dubois told us that if we did not wish to be taught French verse, he would teach us English. Sir Everard preferred the Greek ; but Monsieur Dubois would not engage to teach the mysteries of that poetry in fewer than thirty lessons, having (since his misfortunes) forgotten the letters and some other necessaries.

The first poem I ever wrote was in the character of a shepherd, to Mistress Anne Nanfan, daughter of Squire Fulke Nanfan, of Worcestershire, at that time on a visit to the worshipful family of Compton at Long Compton.

We were young creatures,—I but twenty-four and seven months (for it was written on the 14th of May), and she well-nigh upon a twelvemonth younger. My own verses, the first, are neither here nor there ; indeed, they were imbedded in solid prose, like lampreys and ram's-horns¹⁵ in our limestone,

[¹⁵ In 1st ed. there was a note here running thus: "It is doubtful whether Doctor Buckland will agree with Sir Thomas that these petrifications are ram's-horns and lampreys."]

and would be hard to get out whole. What they are may be seen by her answer, all in verse :

Faithful shepherd ! dearest Tommy !
I have received the letter from ye,
And mightily delight therein.
But mother, *she* says, “Nanny ! Nanny !
How, being staid and prudent, can ye
Think of a man and not of sin ?”

Sir shepherd ! I held down my head,
And “*Mother ! fie, for shame !*” I said ;
All I could say would not content her ;
Mother she would for ever harp on’t,
“*A man’s no better than a serpent,*
And not a crumb more innocenter.”

I know not how it happeneth ; but a poet doth open before a poet, albeit of baser sort. It is not that I hold my poetry to be better than some other in time past, it is because I would shew thee that I was virtuous and wooed virtuously, that I repeat it. Furthermore, I wished to leave a deep impression on the mother’s mind that she was exceedingly wrong in doubting my innocence.

Shakspeare. Gracious Heaven ! and was this too doubted ?

Sir Thomas. Maybe not ; but the whole race of men, the whole male sex, wanted and found in me a protector. I shewed her what I was ready to do.

Shakspeare. Perhaps, sir, it was for that very thing that she put the daughter back and herself forward.

Sir Thomas. I say not so ; but thou mayest know as much as befitteth, by what follows :

Worshipful lady ! honoured madam !
I at this present truly glad am
To have so fair an opportunity
Of saying I would be the man
To bind in wedlock Mistress Anne,
Living with her in holy unity.

And for a jointure I will gi’e her
A good two hundred pounds a year
Accruing from my landed rents,
Whereof see t’other paper, telling
Lands, copses, and grown woods for felling,
Capon’s, and cottage tenements.

And who must come at sound of horn,
 And who pays but a barley-corn,
 And who is bound to keep a whelp,
 And what is brought me for the pound,
 And copyholders, which are sound,
 And which do need the leech's help.

And you may see in these two pages
 Exact their illnesses and ages,
 Enough (God willing) to content ye ;
 Who looks full red, who looks full yellow,
 Who plies the mullen, who the mallow,
 Who fails at fifty, who at twenty.

Jim Yates must go ; he's one day very hot,
 And one day ice ; I take a heriot ;
 And poorly, poorly's Jacob Burgess.
 The doctor tells me he has pour'd
 Into his stomach half his hoard
 Of anthelminticals and purges.

Judith, the wife of Ebenezer
 Fillpots, won't have him long to tease her ;
 Fillpots blows hot and cold like Jim,
 And, sleepless lest the boys should plunder
 His orchard, he must soon knock under ;
 Death has been looking out for him.

He blusters ; but his good yard land
 Under the church, his ale-house, and
 His Bible, which he cut in spite,
 Must all fall in ; he stamps and swears
 And sets his neighbours by the ears—
 Fillpots, thy saddle sits not tight !

Thy epitaph is ready : “ *Here*
Lies one whom all his friends did fear
More than they ever feared the Lord ;
In peace he was at times a Christian ;
In strife, what stiffer Phœnix !
Sing, sing his psalm with one accord.”¹⁶

[¹⁶ In 1st ed. there was an additional verse between this and the next. It ran thus :

“ And he who lent my lord his wife
 Has but a very ticklish life ;
 Although she won him many a hundred,
 'Twon't do ; none comes with briefs and wills,
 And all her gainings are gilt pills
 From the sick madman that she plundered.”]

And the brave lad who sent the bluff
 Olive-faced Frenchman (sure enough)
 Screaming and scouring like a plover,
 Must follow ; him I mean who dash'd
 Into the water and then thrash'd
 The cullion past the town of Dover.

But first there goes the blear old dame
 Who nurs'd me ; you have heard her name,
 No doubt, at Compton, Sarah Salways ;
 There are twelve groats at once, beside
 The frying-pan in which she fried
 Her pancakes.

Madam, I am always, etc.,
 Sir THOMAS LUCY, Knight.

I did believe that such a clear and conscientious exposure
 of my affairs would have brought me a like return. My
 letter was sent back to me with small courtesy. It may be
 there was no paper in the house, or none equalling mine in
 whiteness. No notice was taken of the rent-roll ; but between
 the second and third stanzas these four lines were written, in a
 very fine hand :

Most honour'd knight, Sir Thomas ! two
 For merry Nan will never do ;
 Now under favour let me say't,
 She will bring more herself than that.

I have reason to believe that the worthy lady did neither
 write nor countenance the same, perhaps did not ever know o
 them. She always had at her elbow one who jogged it when
 he listed, and although he could not overrule the daughter, he
 took especial care that none other should remove her from his
 tutelage, even when she had fairly grown up to woman's
 estate.

Now, after all this condescension and confidence, promise
 me, good lad, promise that thou wilt not edge and elbow me.
 Never let it be said, when people say, *Sir Thomas was a poet
 when he willed it, So is Bill Shakspeare !* It beseemeth not
 that our names do go together cheek by jowl in this familiar
 fashion, like an old beagle and a whelp, in couples, where if
 the one would, the other would not.

Sir Silas. Sir, while these thoughts are passing in your mind, remember there is another pair of couples out of which it would be as well to keep the cur's neck.

Sir Thomas. Young man ! dost thou understand Master Silas ?

Shakspeare. But too well. Not those couples in which it might be apprehended that your worship and my unworthiness should appear too close together ; but those sorrowfuller which peradventure might unite Master Silas and me in our road to Warwick and upward. But I resign all right and title unto these as willingly as I did unto the other, and am as ready to let him go alone.

Sir Silas. If we keep wheeling and wheeling, like a flock of pigeons, and rising again when we are within a foot of the ground, we shall never fill the craw.

Sir Thomas. Do thou then question him, Silas.

Sir Silas. I am none of the quorum ; the business is none of mine.

. . . Then Sir Thomas took Master Silas again into the bay window, and said softly,

“ Silas, he hath no inkling of thy meaning. The business is a ticklish one. I like not over much to meddle and make therein.”

Master Silas stood dissatisfied awhile, and then answered,

“ The girl's mother, sir, was housemaid and sempstress in your own family, time back, and you thereby have a right over her unto the third and fourth generation.”

“ I may have, Silas,” said his worship, “ but it was no longer than four or five years agone that folks were fain to speak maliciously of me for only finding my horse in her hovel.”

Sir Silas looked red and shiny as a ripe strawberry on a Snitterfield tile, and answered somewhat peevishly,

“ The same folks, I misgive me, may find the rogue's there any night in the week.”

Whereupon replied Sir Thomas, mortifiedly,

“ I cannot think it, Silas ! I cannot think it.”

And after some hesitation and disquiet,

“ Nay, I am resolved I will not think it ; no man, friend or enemy, shall push it into me.”

“Worshipful sir,” answered Master Silas, “I am as resolute as any one in what I would think and what I would not think, and never was known to fight dunghill in either cockpit.

“Were he only out of the way, she might do her duty, but what doth she now?

“She points his young beard for him ; persuading him it grows thicker and thicker, blacker and blacker ; she washes his ruff, stiffens it, plaits it, tries it upon his neck, removes the hair from under it, pinches it with thumb and forefinger, pretending that he hath moiled it, puts her hand all the way round it, *setting it to rights*, as she calleth it—

“Ah, Sir Thomas ! a louder whistle than that will never call her back again when she is off with him.”

Sir Thomas was angered, and cried tartly,

“Who whistled ? I would know.”

Master Silas said submissively,—

“Your honour, as wrongfully I fancied.”

“Wrongfully, indeed, and to my no small disparagement and discomfort,” said the knight, verily believing that he had not whistled ; for deep and dubious were his cogitations.

“I protest,” went he on to say, “I protest it was the wind of the casement ; and if I live another year I will put a better in the place of it. Whistle indeed ! for what ? I care no more about her than about an unfledged cygnet,—a child,* a chicken, a mere kitten, a crab-blossom in the hedge.”

The dignity of his worship was wounded by Master Silas unaware, and his wrath again turned suddenly upon poor William.

“Hark-ye, knave ! hark-ye again, ill-looking stripling, lanky from vicious courses ! I will reclaim thee from them ; I would do what thy own father would, and cannot. Thou shalt follow his business.”

“I cannot do better, may it please your worship !” said the lad.

“It shall lead thee unto wealth and respectability,” said the

* She was then twenty-eight years of age. Sir Thomas must have spoken of her from earlier recollections. Shakspeare was in his twentieth year.

knight, somewhat appeased by his ready compliancy and low, gentle voice. "Yea, but not here; no witches, no wantons (this word fell gravely and at full-length upon the ear), no spells hereabout.

"Gloucestershire is within a measured mile of thy dwelling. There is one at Bristol, formerly a parish-boy, or little better, who now writeth himself *gentleman* in large, round letters, and hath been elected, I hear, to serve as burgess in parliament for his native city; just as though he had eaten a capon or turkey-poult in his youth, and had actually been at grammar school and college. When he began, he had not credit for a goat-skin; and now, behold ye! this very coat upon my back did cost me eight shillings the dearer for him, he bought up wool so largely."

Shakspeare. May it please your worship! if my father so ordereth, I go cheerfully.

Sir Thomas. Thou art grown discreet and dutiful: I am fain to command thy release, taking thy promise on oath, and some reasonable security, that thou wilt abstain and withhold in future from that idle and silly slut, that sly and scoffing giggler, Hannah Hathaway, with whom, to the heartache of thy poor, worthy father, thou wantonly keepest company.

. . . Then did Sir Thomas ask Master Silas Gough for the Book of Life, bidding him deliver it into the right hand of Billy, with an eye upon him that he touch it with both lips; it being taught by the Jesuits, and caught too greedily out of their society and communion, that whoso toucheth it with one lip only, and thereafter sweareth falsely, cannot be called a perjurer, since perjury is breaking an oath. But breaking half an oath, as he doth who toucheth the Bible or crucifix with one lip only, is no more perjury than breaking an eggshell is breaking an egg, the shell being a part, and the egg being an integral.

William did take the Holy Book with all due reverence the instant it was offered to his hand. His stature seemed to rise therefrom as from a pulpit, and Sir Thomas was quite edified.

"Obedient and conducible youth!" said he. "See there,

Master Silas ! what hast thou now to say against him ? Who sees farthest ? ”

“ The man from the gallows is the most likely, bating his nightcap and blinker,” said Master Silas, peevishly. “ He hath not outwitted me yet.”

“ He seized upon the Anchor of Faith like a martyr,” said Sir Thomas, “ and even now his face burns red as elder-wine before the gossips.”

Shakspeare. I await the further orders of your worship from the chair.

Sir Thomas. I return and seat myself.

. . . And then did Sir Thomas say with great complacency and satisfaction in the ear of Master Silas,

“ What civility, and deference, and sedateness of mind, Silas ! ”

But Master Silas answered not.

Shakspeare. Must I swear, sir ?

Sir Thomas. Yea, swear ; be of good courage. I protest to thee by my honour and knighthood, no ill shall come unto thee therefrom. Thou shalt not be circumvented in thy simpleness and inexperience.

. . . Willy, having taken the Book of Life, did kiss it piously, and did press it unto his breast, saying,

“ Tenderest love is the growth of my heart, as the grass is of Alvescote mead.

“ May I lose my life or my friends, or my memory, or my reason ; may I be viler in my own eyes than those men are—”

Here he was interrupted, most lovingly, by Sir Thomas, who said unto him,

“ Nay, nay, nay ! poor youth ! do not tell me so ! they are not such very bad men, since thou appealest unto Cæsar,—that is, unto the judgment-seat.”

Now his worship did mean the two witnesses, Joseph and Euseby ; and, sooth to say there be many worse. But William had them not in his eye ; his thoughts were elsewhere, as will be evident, for he went on thus :

“ —if ever I forget or desert thee, or ever cease to worship * and cherish thee, my Hannah ! ”

* It is to be feared that his taste for venison outlasted that for matrimony, spite of this vow.

Sir Silas. The madman ! the audacious, desperate, outrageous villain ! Look-ye, sir ! where he flung the Holy Gospel ! Behold it on the holly and box-booughs in the chimney-place, spreaden all abroad, like a lad about to be whipped !

Sir Thomas. Miscreant knave ! I will send after him forthwith !

Ho, there ! is the caitiff at hand, or running off ?

. . . Jonas Greenfield the butler did budge forward after a while, and say, on being questioned,

“ Surely, that was he ! Was his nag tied to the iron gate at the lodge, Master Silas ? ”

Sir Silas. What should I know about the thief’s nag, Jonas Greenfield ?

“ And didst thou let him go, Jonas,—even thou ? ” said Sir Thomas. “ What ! are none found faithful ? ”

“ Lord love your worship,” said Jonas Greenfield ; “ a man of threescore and two may miss catching a kite upon wing. Fleetness doth not make folks the faithfuller, or that youth yonder beats us all in faithfulness.

“ Look ! he darts on like a greyhound whelp after a leveret. He, sure enough, it was ! I now remember the sorrel mare his father bought of John Kinderley last Lammas, swift as he threaded the trees along the park. He must have reached Wellesbourne ere now at that gallop, and pretty nigh Walton-hill.”

Sir Thomas. Merciful Christ ! grant the country be rid of him for ever ! What dishonour upon his friends and native town ! A reputable wool-stapler’s son turned gipsy and poet for life.

Sir Silas. A Beelzebub ; he spake as bigly and fiercely as a soaken yeoman at an election feast,—this obedient and conducible youth !

Sir Thomas. It was so written. Hold thy peace, Silas !

POST-SCRIPTUM

BY ME, EPHRAIM BARNETT.

TWELVE days are over and gone since William Shakspeare did leave our parts. And the spinster, Hannah Hathaway, is in sad doleful plight about him; forasmuch as Master Silas Gough went yesterday unto her, in her mother's house at Shottery, and did desire both her and her mother to take heed and be admonished, that if ever she, Hannah, threw away one thought after the runagate William Shakspeare, he should swing.

The girl could do nothing but weep; while as the mother did give her solemn promise that her daughter should never more think about him all her natural life, reckoning from the moment of this her promise.

And the maiden, now growing more reasonable, did promise the same. But Master Silas said,

“I doubt you will, though.”

“No,” said the mother, “*I answer for her she shall not think of him, even if she see his ghost.*”

Hannah screamed, and swooned, the better to forget him. And Master Silas went home easier and contenteder. For now all the worst of his hard duty was accomplished; he having been, on the Wednesday of last week, at the speech of Master John Shakspeare, Will's father, to inquire whether the sorrel mare was his. To which question the said Master John Shakspeare did answer, “*Yea.*”

“*Enough said!*” rejoined Master Silas.

“*Horse-stealing is capital. We shall bind thee over to appear against the culprit, as prosecutor, at the next assizes.*”

May the Lord in his mercy give the lad a good deliverance, if so be it be no sin to wish it!

October 1, A.D. 1582.

LAUS DEO.

E. B.



PERICLES AND ASPASIA.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY¹
THE EARL OF MULGRAVE,
LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND.

My Lord,

WHEN an author is desirous of prefixing an illustrious name to his title-page, it has usually been thought proper, of late, to solicit the permission. I, who never ask anything of any man, would least of all ask this; and were it peradventure in my hands, should be apt to let it drop out of them. Long before you were in possession of power (you will remember) I prognosticated it from the aspect of the times. I clearly saw the necessity of your becoming more than a man of rank, or even of genius. Your Excellency will correct the faults, and inasmuch as sagacity, integrity, firmness, and moderation can do it, will compensate for the iniquities and atrocities of six centuries: you will unite Great Britain and Ireland; which our princes and parliaments, until now, have never wisely planned nor honestly intended.

With the high respect due to your Excellency from every friend of peace and justice in both countries,

I am,

&c.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

[¹ Omitted in 2nd ed. For further information on the relations between Landor and this nobleman, see Mr Colvin's *Landor*, p. 207.]

ADVERTISEMENT.²

He who opens these Letters for a History of the Times, will be disappointed. Did he find it in a Montague's or a Walpole's? And yet perhaps he ran over them with pleasure. If he cannot do the same here, if he regrets that many are wanting of Pericles, let him take comfort in learning by heart the two first "*Years*" of Thucydides, and in repeating, as he walks along, the sterling and strenuous orations they contain. It is easy to throw pieces of history into letters: many have done it; but there is no species of composition so remote from veri-similitude. Who can imagine to himself a couple of correspondents sitting down for such a purpose, and never turning their eyes toward any other object? Better stand on the fragments of antiquity, and look about us.

It was difficult to avoid every expression and every thought attributed to Pericles by the ancients, and particularly in composing the orations; yet this has been done. The longer of them, which he might be conceived to have spoken on many occurrences, as general and statesman, have been omitted.

Villa Fiesolana, July 4, 1835.

[² Omitted in 2nd ed.]

PERICLES AND ASPASIA.

I.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

CLEONE! I write from Athens. I hasten to meet your reproaches, and to stifle them in my embrace. It was wrong to have left Miletus at all: it was wrong to have parted from you without entrusting you with my secret. No, no, neither was wrong. I have withheld many tears, my sweet Cleone, but never yours; you could always do what you would with me; and I should have been wind-bound by you on the Meander, as surely and inexorably as the fleet at Aulis by Diana.

Ionia is far more beautiful than Attica, Miletus than Athens; for about Athens there is no verdure—no spacious and full and flowing river; few gardens, many olive-trees, so many indeed that we seem to be in an eternal cloud of dust.³ However, when the sea-breezes blow, this tree itself looks beautiful; it looks, in its pliable and undulating branches, irresolute as Ariadne⁴ when she was urged to fly, and pale as Orithyia⁵ when she was borne away.

[³ "And the hills oversmoked behind by the faint grey olive-trees"
—R. Browning—*Up in a Villa—Down in the City.*]

[⁴ " For thus of old fair Ariadne freed
Bold Theseus from the weight of his emprise
For love of him; and with him on his ship
The maiden fled, fearing her father's wrath."

Apollonius Rhodius, iii. 997.]

[⁵ "And Zetes and swift Calais thither came,
They, whom the daughter of Eretheus bore
To the rough wind god far in wintry Thrace.
For as the maiden Oreithyia danced
Beside Ilissus, eager Boreas came
And snatched her from the fair Athenian land."

Apollonius Rhodius, i. 210.]

II.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

COME out, Aspasia, from among those olives. You would never have said a word about any such things, at such a time, unless you had met with an adventure. When you want to hide somewhat, you always run into the thickets of poetry. Pray leave Ariadne with Bacchus,⁶ she cannot be safer ; and Orithyia with Boreas, if you have any reverence for the mysteries of the gods. Now I have almost a mind to say, tell me nothing at all of what has happened to you since you left us. This would punish you as you deserve, for you know that you are dying to tell it. The venerable and good-natured old widow, Epimedea, will have trouble enough, I foresee, with her visitor from Asia. The Milesian kid will overleap her gardenwall, and browse and butt everywhere. I take it as a matter of certainty that you are with her, for I never heard you mention any other relative in Athens, and she was, I remember, the guest of your house. How she loved you, dear good woman ! She would have given your father, Axiochus, all her wealth for you. But when you were seven years old you were worth seven times over what you are now. I loved you then myself. Well, I am resolved to relieve you of your secret.

Prodigal scatterer of precious hopes, and of smiles that seem to rise from the interest you feel, and not from the interest you excite, what victim have you crowned with flowers, and selected to fall at your altar ?

III.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

SPIRIT of divination ! how dared you find me out ? And how dared you accuse me of poetizing ? You who poetize

[⁶“ With Theseus fled her courage and her voice,
And thrice in vain she tried to fly ; and thrice
Stood trembling like a reed within the marsh,
Unstable as wind-shaken ears of corn,
Till Bacchus spake and bade her fear no more,
But welcome truer love than Theseus gave.”

Ovid, Ars Amandi, i. 551.]

more extravagantly yourself. Mine, I do insist upon it, is no worse than we girls in general are apt to write ; "and no better," you will reply, "than we now and then are condemned to listen to, or disposed to read."

Poetry is the weightless integument that our butterflies always shed in our path ere they wing their way towards us. It is precisely of the same form, colour, and substance, for the whole generation. Are all mine well ? and all yours ? I shall be very angry to hear that mine are. If they do not weep, and look wan, and sicken, why then I must, out of very spite. But may the Gods, in their wisdom, keep not only their hearts, but their persons too, just where they are ! I intend to be in love here at Athens. It is true, I do assure you, when I have time, and idleness, and courage for it.

Ay, ay, now your eyes are running over all the rest of the letter. Well, what have you found ? where is the place ? I will keep you in suspense no longer. As soon as there was any light at all, we discovered, on the hill above the city, crowds of people and busy preparations. You are come to it.

IV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I was determined to close my letter when your curiosity was at the highest, that you might flutter and fall from the clouds like Icarus. I wanted two things ; first, that you should bite your lip, an attitude in which you alone look pretty ; and secondly, that you should say half angrily, "This now is exactly like Aspasia." I will be remembered ; and I will make you look just as I would have you.

How fortunate ! to have arrived at Athens, at dawn, on the twelfth of Elaphebolion.⁷ On this day begin the festivals of Bacchus, and the theatre is thrown open at sunrise.

What a theatre ! what an elevation ! what a prospect of city and port, of land and water, of porticoes and temples, of men and heroes, of demi-gods and gods !

It was indeed my wish and intention, when I left Ionia, to be present at the first of the Dionysiaca : but how rarely are

[⁷ Our March.]

wishes and intentions so accomplished, even when winds and waters do not interfere !

I will now tell you all. No time was to be lost, so I hastened on shore in the dress of an Athenian boy, who came over with his mother from Lemnos. In the giddiness of youth, he forgot to tell me that, not being yet eighteen years old, he could not be admitted, and he left me on the steps. My heart sank within me, so many young men stared and whispered ; yet never was stranger treated with more civility. Crowded as the theatre was (for the tragedy had begun), every one made room for me. When they were seated, and I too, I looked toward the stage ; and behold there lay before me, but afar off, bound upon a rock, a more majestic form, and bearing a countenance more heroic, I should rather say more divine, than ever my imagination had conceived ! I know not how long it was before I discovered that as many eyes were directed toward me as toward the competitor of the gods. I was neither flattered by it nor abashed. Every wish, hope, sigh, sensation, was successively with the champion of the human race, with his antagonist Zeus, and his creator Æschylus. How often, O Cleone, have we throbbed with his injuries ! how often hath his vulture torn our breasts ! how often have we thrown our arms around each other's neck, and half-renounced the religion of our fathers ! Even your image, inseparable at other times, came not across me then : Prometheus stood between us. He had resisted in silence and disdain the cruellest tortures that Almightiness could inflict ; and now arose the Nymphs of Ocean, which heaved its vast waves before us ; and now they descended with open arms and sweet benign countenances, and spake with pity ; and the insurgent heart was mollified and quelled.

I sobbed—I dropt.

V.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Is this telling me all ? you faithless creature ! There is much to be told when Aspasia faints in the theatre : and Aspasia in disguise !

My sweet and dear Aspasia ! with all your beauty, of which you cannot but be conscious, how is it possible you could have hoped to be undetected ? Certainly there never was any woman, or even any man, so little vain as you are. Formerly you were rather so about your poetry : but now you really write it well, you have overcome this weakness ; nay, you doubt whether your best verses are tolerable. You have told me this several times, and you always say what you think, unless when any one might be hurt or displeased. I am glad the observation comes across me, for I must warn you upon it.

Take care then, Aspasia ! do not leave off entirely all disimulation. It is as feminine a virtue, and as necessary to a woman, as religion. If you are without it, you will have a grace the less, and (what you could worse spare) a sigh the more.

VI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I WAS not quite well when I wrote to you. When I am not quite well I must always write to you ; I am better after it.

Where did I leave off ?

Ah, Cleone ! Cleone ! I have learnt your lesson ; I am dissembling ; it must not be with you. My tears are falling. I acted unworthily. And are these tears indeed for my fault against you ? I cannot tell ; if I could, I would candidly. Every thing that has happened, every thing that shall happen hereafter, I will lay upon your knees. Counsel me—direct me. Even were I as sensible as you are, I should not be able to discover my own faults. The clearest eyes do not see the cheeks below, nor the brow above them.

To proceed then in my narrative. Every thing appeared to me an illusion but the tragedy. What was divine seemed human, and what was human seemed divine.

An apparition of resplendent and unearthly beauty threw aside, with his slender arms, the youth, philosophers, magistrates, and generals, that surrounded me, with a countenance as confident, a motion as rapid, and a command as unresisted as a god.

“ Stranger ! ” said he, “ I come from Pericles, to offer you my assistance.”

I looked in his face ; it was a child's.

"We have attendants here who shall conduct you from the crowd," said he.

"Venus and Cupid !" cried one.

"We are dogs," growled another.

"Worse !" rejoined a third, "we are slaves."

"Happy man ! happy man ! if thou art theirs," whispered the next in his ear, and followed us close behind.

I have since been informed that Pericles, who sate below us on the first seat, was the only man who did not rise. No matter ; why should he ? why did the rest ? But it was very kind in him to send his cousin ; I mean it was very kind for so proud a man.

Epimeda wept over me when I entered her house, and burned incense before the Gods, and led me into my chamber.

"I have a great deal to say to you, my dear Aspasia ; but you must go to sleep : your bath shall be ready at noon ; but be sure you sleep till then," said she.

I did indeed sleep, and (will you believe it ?) instantly and soundly. Never was bath more refreshing, never was reproof more gentle, than Epimeda's.

I found her at my pillow when I awoke, and she led me to the marble conch.

"Dear child !" said she, when I had stept in, "you do not know our customs. You should have come at once to my house ; you never should have worn men's clothes : indeed you should not have gone to the theatre at all ; but, being there, and moreover in men's habiliments, you should have taken care not to have fainted, as they say you did. My husband, Thessalus, would never hear of fainting ; he used to tell me it was a bad example. But he fainted at last, poor man ! and—I minded his admonition. Why ! what a lovely child you are grown, my little Aspasia ! Is the bath too hot ? Aspasia ! can it be ? why, you are no child at all ! "

I really do believe that this idle discourse of Epimeda, which will tire you perhaps, was the only one that would not have wearied out my spirits. It neither made me think nor answer. What a privilege ! what a blessing ! how seldom to be enjoyed in our conferences with the silly ! Ah ! do not

let me wrong the kind⁸ Epimedeia ! Those are not silly who have found the way to our hearts ; and far other names do they deserve who open to us theirs.

VII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

THE boy about whom I wrote to you in my letter of yesterday is called Alcibiades.* He lisps and blushes at it. His cousin, Pericles, you may have heard, enjoys the greatest power and reputation, both as an orator and a general, of any man in Athens. Early this morning the beautiful child came to visit me, and told me that when his cousin had finished his studies, which he usually had done about three hours after sunrise, he would desire him to come also.

I replied, " By no means do it, my beautiful and brave protector ! Surely, on considering the matter, you will think you are taking too great a liberty with a person so distinguished."

" I take no liberties with any other," he said.

When I expressed in my countenance a little surprise at his impetuosity, he came forward and kissed my brow. Then, said he, more submissively, " Pardon my rudeness. I like very well to be told what to do by those who are fond of me ; but never to be told what not to do ; and the more fond they are of me the less I like it. Because when they tell me what to do, they give me an opportunity of pleasing them ; but when they tell me what not to do, it is a sign that I have displeased, or am likely to displease them. Beside—I believe there are some other reasons, but they have quite escaped me."

" It is time I should return," said he, " or I shall forget all about the hour of his studies (I mean Pericles), and mine too."

[⁸ First ed. : " kind-hearted."]

* He had no right to be at the theatre ; but he might have taken the liberty, for there was nobody in Athens whom he feared, even in his childhood. Thucydides calls him *a youth* in the twelfth year of the Peloponnesian war. He was, on the mother's side, grandson of Megacles, whose grand-daughter Isodoe, married Cimon : her father Euryptolemus was cousin-german to Pericles.

I would not let him go, however, but inquired who were his teachers, and repeated to him many things from Sappho, and Alcæus, and Pindar, and Simonides. He was amazed, and told me he preferred them to Fate and Necessity, Pytho and Pythonissa.

I would now have kissed him in my turn, but he drew back, thinking (no doubt) that I was treating him like a child —that a kiss is never given but as the price of pardon, and that I had pardoned him before for his captiousness.

VIII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

ASPASIA! I foresee that henceforward you will admire the tragedy of Prometheus more than ever. But do not tell any one, excepting so fond a friend as Cleone, that you prefer the author to Homer. I agree with you that the conception of such a drama is in itself a stupendous effort of genius; that the execution is equal to the conception; that the character of Prometheus is more heroic than any in heroic poetry; and that no production of the same extent is so magnificent and so exalted. But the Iliad is not a region, it is a continent; and you might as well compare this prodigy to it as the cataract of the Nile to the Ocean. In the one we are overpowered by the compression and burst of the element; in the other we are carried over an immensity of space, bounding the earth, not bounded by her, and having nothing above but the heavens.

Let us enjoy, whenever we have an opportunity, the delight of admiration, and perform the duties of reverence. May others hate what is admirable! We will hate likewise, O my Aspasia! when we can do no better. I am unable to foretell the time when this shall happen: it lies, I think, beyond the calculations of Meton.

I am happy to understand that the Athenians have such a philosopher among them. Hitherto we have been inclined to suppose that philosophy at Athens is partly an intricate tissue of subtle questions and illusory theories, knotted with syllogisms; and partly an indigested mass of unexamined assertions

and conflicting dogmas. The Ionians are more silent, contemplative, and recluse. Knowing that Nature will not deliver her oracles in the crowd, nor by sound of trumpet, they open their breasts to her in solitude, with the simplicity of children, and look earnestly in her face for a reply. Meton, and Democritus,⁹ and Anaxagoras, may perhaps lay their hands upon the leapings of your tettinxes,¹⁰ and moderate their chirping, but I apprehend that the genius of the people will always repose upon the wind-skins of the sophists. Comedy might be their corrector; but Comedy seems to think she has two offices to perform; from one side of the stage to explode absurdity, and from the other to introduce indecency. She might, under wise regulations (and these she should impose upon herself), render more service to a state than Philosophy could in whatsoever other character. And I wonder that Aristophanes, strong in the poetical faculty, and unrivalled in critical acuteness, should not perceive that a dominion is within his reach which is within the reach of no mortal beside; a dominion whereby he may reform the manners, dictate the pursuits, and regulate the affections of his countrymen. Perhaps he never could have done it so effectually, had he been better and begun otherwise; but having, however unworthy might have been the means and methods, seized upon their humours, they now are as pliable to him as waxen images to Thessalian witches.¹¹ He keeps them

[⁹ Diogenes Laertius says of him, "He was deeply versed in physics and ethics; moreover, he was well skilled in mathematics and all fitting knowledge, and had a full acquaintance with the various arts. He it was who used to say, 'Speech is the shadow of action.'"]

[¹⁰ "The Athenians were the first who laid aside arms and adopted an easier and more luxurious way of life. Quite recently, the old-fashioned refinement of dress still lingered among the elder men of their richer class, who wore under-garments of linen, and bound back their hair in a knot with golden clasps in the form of grasshoppers (tettinx)."—*Thucydides*, i. 6. *Jowett's translation.*]

[¹¹ "For this Thessalian land has evil herbs
Springing from every crag and stones that heed
The witches when they chant their fatal charms."

—*Lucan, Pharsalia.*]

before the fire he has kindled, and he has only to sing the right song.

Beware, my dear Aspasia, never to offend him ; for he¹³ holds more terrors at his command than *Æschylus*. The tragic poet rolls the thunder that frightens, the comic wields the lightning that kills. Aristophanes has the power of tossing you among the populace of a thousand cities for a thousand years.

A great poet is more powerful than Sesostris,¹³ and a wicked one more formidable than Phalaris.¹⁴

IX.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

EPIMEDEA has been with me in my chamber. She asked me whether the women of Ionia had left off wearing ear-rings. I answered that I believed they always had worn them, and that they were introduced by the Persians, who received¹⁵ them from nations more remote.

“And do you think yourself too young,” said she, “for such an ornament?” producing at the same instant a massy pair, inlaid with the largest emeralds. “Alas! alas!” said she, “your mother neglected you strangely. There is no hole in the ear, right or left! We can mend that, however; I know a woman who will bring us the prettiest little pan of charcoal, with the prettiest little steel rod in it; and, before you can cry out, one ear lets light through. These are yours,” said she, “and so shall every thing be when I am gone¹⁶—house, garden, quails, leveret.”

“Generous Epimedea!” said I, “do not say things that pain me. I will accept a part of the present; I will wear these beautiful emeralds on one arm. Thinking of nailing

[¹³ First ed. : “He.”]

[¹³ The great Ramses, King of Egypt. Herodotus tells how he conquered all Arabia, Asia Minor, Thrace, and Scythia.]

[¹⁴ “But him who burned men with fire within a brazen bull Phalaris, that had no pity, men tell of everywhere with hate.”—*Pindar, Pyth., i. 185. Mr E. Myers’ Translation.*]

[¹⁵ First ed. : “had received.”]

[¹⁶ “When I am gone,” not in 1st ed.]

them in my ears, you resolve to make me steady, but I am unwilling they should become dependencies of Attica."

"All our young women wear them ; the Goddesses too."

"The Goddesses are in the right," said I ; "their ears are marble, but I do not believe any one of them would tell us that women were made to be the settings of pearls and emeralds."

I had taken one, and was about to kiss her, when she said, "Do not leave me an odd ear-ring : put the other in the hair."

"Epimedea," said I, "I have made a vow never to wear on the head any thing but one single flower, a¹⁷ single wheat-ear, green or yellow and ivy, or vine-leaves : the number of these are not mentioned in the vow."

"Rash child ! " said Epimedea, shaking her head ; "I never made but two vows ; one was when I took a husband."

"And the other ? Epimedea ! "

"No matter," said she ; "it might be, for what I know, never to do the like again."

X.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

PERICLES has visited me. After many grave and gentle inquiries, often suspended, all relating to my health ; and after praises of Miletus and pity for my friends left behind, he told me that, when he was quite assured of my recovery¹⁸ from the fatigues of the voyage, he hoped I would allow him to collect from me, at my leisure hours, the information he wanted on the literature of Ionia. Simple-hearted man ! in praising the authors of our country, he showed me that he knew them perfectly, from first to last. And now indeed his energy was displayed : I thought he had none at all. With how sonorous and modulated a voice did he repeat the more poetical passages of our elder historians ! and how his whole soul did lean upon Herodotus ! Happily for me, he observed not my enthusiasm. And now he brought me into the presence of

[¹⁷ First ed. : "one."]

[¹⁸ First ed. : "perfect recovery."]

Homer. "We claim him," said he; "but he is yours. Observe with what partiality he always dwells on Asia! How infinitely more civilized are Glaucus and Sarpedon than any of the Grecians he was called upon to celebrate! Priam, Paris, Hector, what polished men! Civilisation has never made a step in advance, and never will, on those countries; she had gone so far in the days of Homer. He keeps Helen pretty rigorously out of sight, but he opens his heart to the virtues of Andromache. What a barbarian is the son of a goddess! ¹⁹ Pallas must seize him by the hair to avert the murder of his leader; but at the eloquence of the Phrygian king the storm of the intractable homicide bursts in tears."

"And *Æschylus*," said I, but could not continue: blushes rose into my cheek, and pained me at the recollection of my weakness.

"He has left us," said Pericles, who pretended not to have perceived it; ²⁰ "I am grieved that my prayers were inadequate to detain him. But what prayers or what expostulations can influence the lofty mind, labouring and heaving under injustice and indignity? *Æschylus* knew he merited, by his genius ²¹ and his services, the gratitude and admiration of the Athenians. He saw others preferred before him, and hoisted sail. At the rumour of his departure, such was the consternation, as if the shield of Pallas in the Parthenon had dropt from her

[¹⁹ So said he, and grief came upon Peleus' son, and his heart within his shaggy breast was divided in counsel, whether to draw his keen blade from his thigh and so slay Atreides, or to assuage his anger and curb his soul. While yet he doubted thereof in heart and soul, and was drawing his great sword from its sheath, Athene came to him from heaven, sent forth of the white-armed goddess Hera, whose heart loved both alike and had care for them. She stood behind Peleus' son and caught him by his golden hair.—*Iliad*, i. Thus spake Priam and stirred within Achilles desire to make ament for his father. And he touched the old man's hand and gently moved him back. And as they both bethought them of their dead, so Priam for man-slaying Hector wept sore as he was fallen before Achilles' feet, and Achilles wept for his own father and now again for Patroklos, and their moan went up throughout the house.—*Iliad*, xxiv. *Messrs Lang, Leaf, and Myers' Translation.*]

[²⁰ First ed.: "who perceived it but pretended not."]

[²¹ First ed.: "both by his genius."]

breast upon the pavement. That glory shines now upon the crown of Hiero²² which has sunk for Athens."

"You have still great treasures left," said I: for he was moved.

"True," replied he, "but will not every one remark, who hears the observation, that we know not how to keep them, and have never weighed them?"

I sate silent; he resumed his serenity.

"We ought to change places," said he, "at the feet of the poets. Æschylus, I see, is yours; Homer is mine. Aspasia should be a Pallas to Achilles; and Pericles a subordinate power, comforting and consoling the afflicted demi-god. Impetuosity, impatience, resentment, revenge itself, are pardonable sins in the very softest of your sex: on brave endurance rises *our* admiration."

"I love those better who endure with constancy," said I.

"Happy!" replied he, "thrice happy! O Aspasia, the constancy thus tried and thus rewarded!"

He spoke with tenderness; he rose with majesty; bowed to Epimeda; touched gently, scarcely at all, the hand I presented to him, bent over it, and departed.

XL

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I TOLD you I would love, O Cleone! but I am so near it that I dare not.

Tell me what I am to do; I can do anything but write and think.

Pericles has not returned.

I am nothing here in Athens.

Five days are over; six almost.

O what long days are these of Elaphebolion!

[²² The reasons, which induced Æschylus to leave Athens, can only be conjectured. It is not improbable that he disliked the changes in the constitution introduced by Pericles. It is possible that the charge of impiety which, Aristotle tells us, was brought against him may have compelled him to take refuge at the court of Hiero of Syracuse. There he would have found Pindar settled already.]

XII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

TAKE heed, Aspasia ! All orators are deceivers ; and Pericles is the greatest of orators.

I will write nothing more, lest you should attend in preference to any other part of my letter.

Yes ; I must repeat my admonition : I must speak out plainly ; I must try other words—stronger—more frightful. Love of supremacy, miscalled political glory, finds most, and leaves all, dishonest.

The Gods and Goddesses watch over and preserve you, and send you safe home again !

XIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

FEAR not for me, Cleone ! Pericles has attained the summit of glory ; and the wisdom and virtue that acquired it for him are my sureties.

A great man knows the value of greatness ; he dares not hazard it, he will not squander it. Imagine you that the confidence and affection of a people, so acute, so vigilant, so jealous, as the Athenians, would have rested so firmly and constantly on one inconstant and infirm ?

If he loves me the merit is not mine ; the fault will be it he ceases.

XIV.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

I MUST and will fear for you, and the more because I perceive²³ you are attracted as the bees are, by an empty sound, the fame of your admirer. You love Pericles for that very quality which ought to have set you on your guard against him. In contentions for power, the philosophy and the poetry of life are dropped and trodden down. Domestic affections

[²³ First ed. : " perceive that."]

can no more bloom and flourish in the hardened race-course of politics, than flowers can find nourishment in the pavement of the streets. In the politician the whole creature is factitious ; if ever he speaks as before, he speaks either from memory or invention.

But such is your beauty, such your genius, it may alter the nature of things. Endowed with the power of Circe, you will exert it oppositely, and restore to the most selfish and most voracious of animals the uprightness and dignity of man.

XV.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

It is not wisdom in itself, O Aspasia ! it is the manner of imparting it that affects the soul, and alone deserves the name of eloquence. I have never been moved by any but yours.

Is it the beauty that shines over it, is it the voice that ripens it, giving it those lovely colours, that delicious freshness ; is it the modesty and diffidence with which you present it to us, looking for nothing but support ? Sufficient were any one of them singly ; but all united have come forward to subdue me, and have deprived me of my courage, my self-possession, and my repose.

I dare not hope to be beloved, Aspasia ! I did hope it once in my life, and have been disappointed.²⁴ Where I sought for happiness, none is offered me : I have neither the sunshine nor the shade.

So unfortunate²⁵ in earlier days, ought I, ten years later, to believe that she, to whom the earth, with whatever is beautiful and graceful in it, bows prostrate, will listen to me as her lover ? I dare not ; too much have I dared already. But if, O Aspasia ! I should sometimes seem heavy and dull in

[²⁴ "For though his wife, who was his relation and had been first married to Hippoⁿicus, by whom she had Colias the rich, brought him two sons, Xanthippus and Paralus, yet they lived so ill together that they parted by consent. She was married to another."—Lang-horne's *Plutarch, Life of Pericles.*]

[²⁵ First ed. : "If then I was so unfortunate."]

conversation, when happier men surround you, pardon my infirmity.

I have only one wish—I may not utter it: I have only one fear—this at least is not irrational, and I will own it;—the fear that Aspasia could never be sufficiently happy with me.

xvi.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

Do you doubt, O Pericles, that I shall be sufficiently happy with you? This doubt of yours assures me that I shall be.

I throw aside my pen to crown the Gods; and I worship thee first, O Pallas! who protectest the life, enlightenest the mind, establishest the power, and exaltest the glory of Pericles.

xvii.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

I TREMBLE both for you and your lover. The people of Athens may applaud at first the homage paid to beauty and genius; nevertheless there are many whose joy will spring from malignity, and who will exult at what they think (I know not whether quite unjustly) a weakness in Pericles.

I shall always be restless about you. Let me confess to you, I do not like your sheer democracies. What are they good for? Why, yes, they have indeed their use; the filth and ferment of the compost are necessary for raising rare plants.

O how I wish we were again together in that island on our river, which we called the *Fortunate*! It was almost an island when your father cut across the isthmus of about ten paces, to preserve the swan-nest.

Xenades has left Miletus. We know not whither he is gone, but we presume to his mines in Lemnos. It was always with difficulty he could be persuaded to look after his affairs. He is too rich, too young, too thoughtless. But since you left Miletus, we have nothing here to detain him.

I wish I could trifle with you about your Pericles. Any wager,²⁶ he is the only lover who never wrote verses upon you.

In a politician a verse is an ostracism.

XVIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

My Pericles (mine, mine he is) *has* written verses upon me; not many, nor worth his prose, even the shortest sentence of it. But you will read them with pleasure for their praises of Miletus.

No longer ago than yesterday an ugly young philosopher declared his passion for me, as you shall see. I did not write anything back to Pericles—I did to the other. I will not run the risk of having half my letter left unread by you, in your hurry to come into the poetry.

Here it all is.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

Flower of Ionia's fertile plains,
Where Pleasure leagued with Virtue reigns,
Where the Pierian Maids of old,
Yea, long ere Ilion's tale was told,
'Too pure, too sacred for our sight,
Descended with the silent night
To young Arctinus,²⁷ and Mæander
Delay'd his course for Melesander !
If there be city on the earth
Proud in the children of her birth,
Wealth, science, beauty, story, song,
These to Miletus all belong.
To fix the diadem on his brow
For ever, one was wanting—thou.

I could not be cruel to such a suitor, even if he asked me for pity. Love makes one half of every man foolish, and the other half cunning. Pericles touched me on the side of

[²⁶ First ed.: "Any wager upon it."]

[²⁷ Arctinus of Miletus, the most famous of the cyclic poets, was at one time believed to have written before the time of Homer.]

Miletus, and Socrates came up to me straightforward from Prometheus.

SOCRATES TO ASPASIA.

1.

He who stole fire from heaven,
 Long heav'd his bold and patient breast; 'twas riven
 By the Caucasian bird and bolts of Jove.
 Stolen that fire have I,
 And am enchain'd to die
 By every jealous Power that frowns above.

2.

I call not upon thee again
 To hear my vows and calm my pain,
 Who sittest high enthron'd
 Where Venus rolls her gladsome star,
 Propitious Love! But thou disown'd
 By sire and mother, whosoe'er they are,
 Unblest in form and name, Despair!
 Why dost thou follow that bright demon? why
 His purest altar art thou always nigh?

I was sorry that Socrates should suffer so much for me.
 Pardon the fib, Cleone!—let it pass—I was sorry just as
 we all are upon such occasions, and wrote him this consolation.

1.

O thou who sittest with the wise,
 And searchest higher lore,
 And openest regions to their eyes
 Unvisited before!
 I'd run to loose thee if I could,
 Nor let the vulture taste thy blood.
 But, pity! pity! Attic bee!
 'Tis happiness forbidden me.

2.

Despair is not for good or wise,
 And should not be for love;
 We all must bear our destinies
 And bend to those above.

Birds flying o'er the stormy seas
 Alight upon their proper trees,
 Yet wisest men not always know
 Where they should stop, or whither go.

XIX.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I AM quite ashamed of Alcibiades—quite angry with him. What do you imagine he has been doing? He listened to my conversation with Pericles, on the declaration of love from the *Philosopher Bound*, and afterwards to the verses I repeated in answer to his, which pleased my Pericles extremely, not perhaps for themselves, but because I had followed his advice in writing them, and had returned to him with the copy so speedily.

Alcibiades said he did not like them at all, and could write better himself. We smiled at this; and his cousin said, “Do then, my boy!”

Would you believe it? he not only wrote, but I fear (for he declares he did) actually sent these:

O Satyr-son of Sophroniscus! ²⁸
 Would Alcon cut me an hibiscus,
 I'd wield it as the goatherds do,
 And swing thee a sound stroke or two,
 Bewilder, if thou canst, us boys,
 Us, or the sophists, with thy toys,
 Thy *kalokagathos*—beware!
 Keep to the good, and leave the fair.

Could he really be the composer? what think you? or did he get any of his wicked friends to help him? The verses are very bold, very scandalous, very shocking. I am vexed and sorry; but what can be done? We must seem to know nothing about the matter.

The audacious little creature—not very little, he is within

[²⁸ “I say then, that he (Socrates) is exactly like the masks of Silenus, which may be seen in the statuaries' shops, sitting with pipes and flutes in their mouths; and they are made to open in the middle and have figures of the gods inside them. . . . You yourself will not deny, Socrates, that your face is like that of a Satyr.”—*Alcibiades in the Symposium*. *Jowett's Dialogues of Plato*. Vol. II. p. 66.]

four²⁹ fingers of my height—is half in love with me. He flames up at the mention of Socrates—can he be jealous?

Pericles tells me that the philosophers here are as susceptible of malice as of love. It may be so, for the plants which are sweet in some places are acrid in others.

He said to me, smiling, “I shall be represented in their schools as a sophist, because Aspasia and Alcibiades were unruly. O that boy! who knows but his mischievous verses will be a reason sufficient, in another year, why I am unable to command an army or harangue an assembly of the people?

xx.

XENIADES TO ASPASIA.

ASPASIA! Aspasia! have you forgotten me? have you forgotten us? Our childhood was one, our earliest youth was undivided. Why should you not see me? Did you fear that you would have to reproach me for any fault I have committed? This would have pained you formerly; ah, how lately!

Your absence—not absence, flight—has broken my health, and left me fever and frenzy. Eumedes is certain I can only recover my health by composure. Foolish man! as if composure were more easy to recover than health. Was there ever such a madman as to say, “You will never have the use of your limbs again unless you walk and run!”

I am weary of advice, of remonstrance, of pity, of everything;—above all, of life.

Was it anger (how dared I be angry with you?) that withheld me from imploring the sight of you? Was it pride? Alas! what pride is left me? I am preferred no longer; I am rejected, scorned, loathed. Was it always so? Well may I ask the question; for every thing seems uncertain to me but my misery. At times I know not whether I am mad or dreaming. No, no, Aspasia! the past was a dream, the present is a reality. The mad and the dreaming do not shed tears as I do. And yet in these bitter tears are my happiest

[²⁹ First ed.: “three.”]

moments ; and some angry demon knows it, and presses my temples that there shall fall but few.

You refused to admit me. I asked too little, and deserved the refusal. Come to me. This you will not refuse, unless you are bowed to slavery. Go, tell your despot this, with my curses and defiance.

I am calmer, but insist. Spare yourself, Aspasia, one tear, and not by an effort, but by a duty.

xxi.³⁰

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

OF all men living, what man do you imagine has come to Athens ? Insensate ! now you know. What other, so beloved, would ever have left Miletus ! I wish I could be convinced that your coldness or indifference had urged him to this extravagance. I can only promise you we will not detain him. Athens is not a refuge for the perfidious or the flighty. But if he is unfortunate ; what shall we do with him ? Do ? I will tell him to return. Expect him hourly.

xxii.

ASPASIA TO XENIADES.

I AM pained to my innermost heart that you are ill.

Pericles is not the person you imagine him. Behold his billet ! And cannot you think of me with equal generosity ?

True, we saw much of each other in our childhood, and many childish things we did together. This is the reason why I went out of your way as much as I could afterward. There is another too. I hoped you would love more the friend that I love most. How much happier would she make you than the flighty Aspasia ! We resemble each other too much, Xeniaades ! we should never have been happy, so ill-mated. Nature hates these alliances : they are like those of brother and sister. I never loved any one but Pericles. None else attracts the admiration of the world. I stand, O Xeniaades !

[³⁰ Not in 1st ed.]

not only above slavery, but above splendour, in that serene light which Homer describes as encompassing the Happy on Olympus. I will come to visit you within the hour ; be calm, be contented ! love me, but not too much, Xeniades !

XXIII.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

XENIADES, whom I loved a little in my childhood, and (do not look serious now, my dearest Pericles !) a very little afterward, is sadly ill. He was always, I know not how, extravagant in his wishes, although not so extravagant as many others ; and what do you imagine he wishes now ? He wishes—but he is very ill, so ill he cannot rise from his bed—that I would go and visit him. I wonder whether it would be quite considerate : I am half inclined to go, if you approve of it.

Poor youth ! he grieves me bitterly.

I shall not weep before him ; I have wept so much here. Indeed, indeed, I wept, my Pericles, only because I had written too unkindly.

XXIV.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

Do what your heart tells you : yes, Aspasia, do *all* it tells you. Remember how august it is. It contains the temple, not only of Love, but of Conscience ; and a whisper is heard from the extremity of the one to the extremity of the other.

Bend in pensiveness, even in sorrow, on the flowery bank of youth, whereunder runs the stream that passes irreversibly ! let the garland drop into it, let the hand be refreshed by it—but—may the beautiful feet of Aspasia stand firm !

XXV.

XENIADES TO ASPASIA.

You promised you would return. I thought you only broke hearts, not promises.

It is now broad daylight: I see it clearly, although the blinds are closed. A long sharp ray cuts off one corner of the room, and we shall hear the crash presently.

Come; but without that pale silent girl: I hate her. Place her on the other side of you, not on mine.

And this plane-tree gives no shade whatever. We will sit in some other place.

No, no; I will not have you call her to us. Let her play where she is—the notes are low—she plays sweetly.

XXVI.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

SEE what incoherency! He did not write it, not one word. The slave who brought it, told me that he was desired by the guest to write his orders, whenever he found his mind composed enough to give any.

About four hours after my departure, he called him, mildly, and said, "I am quite recovered."

He gave no orders, however, and spake nothing more for some time. At last he raised himself up, and rested on his elbow, and began (said the slave) like one inspired. The slave added, that finding he was indeed quite well again, both in body and mind, and capable of making as fine poetry as any man in Athens, he had written down every word with the greatest punctuality; and that, looking at him for more, he found he had fallen into as sound a slumber as a reaper's.

"Upon this I ran off with the verses," said he.

XXVII.⁸¹

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

COMFORT him. But you must love him, if you do. Well! comfort him. Forgive my inconsiderateness. You will not love him now. You would not receive him when your bosom was without an occupant. And yet you saw him daily. Others, all others, pine away before him. I wish I could

[⁸¹ Not in 1st ed.]

solace my soul with poetry, as you have the power of doing. In all the volumes I turn over, I find none exactly suitable to my condition : part expresses my feelings, part flies off from them to something more light and vague. I do not believe the best writers of love poetry ever loved. How could they write if they did ? where could they collect the thoughts, the words, the courage ? Alas ! alas ! men can find all these, Aspasia, and leave us after they have found them. But in Xeniaede there is no fault whatever : he never loved me : he never said he did : he fled only from my immodesty in loving him. Dissembler as I was, he detected it. Do pity him, and help him : but pity me too, who am beyond your help.

XXVIII.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

TEARS, O Aspasia, do not dwell long upon the cheeks of youth. Rain drops easily from the bud, rests on the bosom of the maturer flower, and breaks down that one only which hath lived its day.

Weep, and perform the offices of friendship. The season of life, leading you by the hand, will not permit you to linger at the tomb of the departed ; and Xeniaede, when your first tear fell upon it, entered into the number of the blessed.

XXIX.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

WHAT shall I say to you, tender and sweet Cleone ! The wanderer is in the haven of happiness—the restless has found rest.

Weep not ; I have shed all your tears—not all—they burst from me again.

XXX.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

O ! HE was too beautiful to live ! Is there anything that shoots through the world so swiftly as a sunbeam ! Epialtes

has told me everything. He sailed back without waiting at the islands ; by your orders, he says.

What hopes could I, with any prudence, entertain ? The chaplet you threw away would have cooled and adorned my temples ; but how could he ever love another who had once loved you ? I am casting my broken thoughts before my Aspasia : the little shells upon the shore, that the storm has scattered there, and that heedless ³² feet have trampled on.

I have prayed to Venus ; but I never prayed her to turn toward me the fondness that was yours. I fancied, I even hoped, you might accept it ; and my prayer was—"Grant I may never love !" Afar from me, O Goddess ! be the malignant warmth that dries up the dews of friendship.

xxxI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

PERICLES has insisted on it that I should change the air, and has recommended to me an excursion to the borders of the state.

"If you pass them a little way," said he, "you will come to Tanagra, and that will inflame you with ambition."

The honour in which I hold the name of Corinna induced me to undertake a journey to her native place. Never have I found a people so hospitable as the inhabitants. Living at a distance from the sea, they are not traders, nor adventurers, nor speculators, nor usurers, but cultivate a range of pleasant hills, covered with vines. Hermes is the principal God they worship ; yet I doubt whether a single prayer was ever offered up to him by a Tanagrian for success in thievery.

The beauty of Corinna ³³ is no less celebrated than her poetry.

[³² Not in 1st ed.]

[³³ Now of Corinna, the only woman who ever wrote poetry in Tanagra, there is a statue in an open place in the city, and in the gymnasium there is a picture showing her with the fillet round her hair which she won at Thebes, when she overcame Pindar in singing ; and I think she got the victory partly because she sang not as Pindar

I remarked, that the women speak of it with great exultation, while the men applaud her genius; and I asked my venerable host, Agesilaus, how he could account for it?

“I can account for nothing that you ladies do,” said he, “although I have lived among you seventy-five years: I only know that it was exactly the contrary while she was living. We youths were rebuked by you³⁴ when we talked about her beauty; and the rebuke was only softened by the candid confession, that she was *clever—in her way.*”

“Come back with me to Athens, O Agesilaus!” said I, “and we will send Aristophanes to Tanagra.”

XXXII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I HAVE been reading all the poetry of Corinna that I could collect. Certainly it is better than Hesiod's, or even than Myrtis's,³⁵ who taught her and Pindar,—not the rudiments of the art, for this is the only art in which the rudiments are incommunicable,—but what was good, what was bad, in her verses, why it was so, and how she might correct the worse and improve the better.

Hesiod, who is also a Boeotian, is admirable for the purity of his life and soundness of his precepts, but there is hardly a trace of poetry in his ploughed field.

I find in all his writings but one verse worth transcribing, and that only for the melody.

“In a soft meadow, and on vernal flowers.”

did in the Dorian dialect, but so that the *Æolians* could more easily understand her, and chiefly because she must have been the most beautiful woman of her day, if one may judge from the portrait.—*Pausanias*, ix. 22. 3.]

[³⁴ Not in 1st ed.]

[³⁵ Not a line of Myrtis is known to have survived. Plutarch (*Quæstiones Græcæ*, c. 40) has, however, preserved the subject of one of her poems. A fragment of Corinna runs thus: “For my part I blame the clear-voiced Myrtis, that being a woman she went to contend with Pindar;” but the allusion is obscure.]

I do not wonder he was opposed to Homer.³⁶ What an advantage to the enemies of greatness (that is, to mankind) to be able to match one so low against one so lofty!

The Greek army before Troy would have been curious to listen to a dispute between Agamemnon and Achilles, but would have been transported with ecstasy to have been present at one between the king of men and Thersites.

There are few who possess all the poetry of any voluminous author. I doubt whether there are ten families in Athens in which all the plays of Æschylus are preserved. Many keep what pleases them most: few consider that every page of a really great poet has something in it which distinguishes him from an inferior order: something which, if insubstantial as the aliment, serves at least as a solvent to the aliment, of strong and active minds.

I asked my Pericles what he thought of Hesiod.

“I think myself more sagacious,” said he.

“Hesiod found out that half was more than all; ³⁷ I have found out that one is.”

XXXIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

A SLAVE brought to me, this morning, an enormous load of papers, as many as he could carry under both arms. They are treatises by the most celebrated philosophers. Some hours afterward, when the sun was declining, Pericles came in, and asked me if I had examined or looked over any portion of them. I told him I had opened those only which bore the superscription of famous names, but, that unless he

[³⁶ Now about this time Ganuktor was celebrating funeral games at Chalcis for Epidaurus his father, king of Eubœa, and summoned to them all men who were famous, whether for strength and swiftness of foot or for wisdom. Thither by chance came Homer and Hesiod, and many of the notable men of Chalcis were present as judges of the contest between the poets. And, though both acquitted themselves well, they say that Hesiod had the better.—*The Contest of Hesiod and Homer.*.]

[³⁷ Fools the kings are; for they know not how much more the half is than the whole; nor all the sweetness of a diet on herbs.—*Hesiod, Works and Days*, 40.]

would assist me, I was hopeless of reconciling one part with another in the same writers.

“The first thing requisite,” said I, “is, that as many as are now at Athens should meet together, and agree upon a nomenclature of terms. From definitions we may go on to propositions; but we cannot make a step unless the foot rests somewhere.”

He smiled at me. “Ah, my Aspasia!” said he, “Philosophy does not bring her sons together; she portions them off early, gives them a scanty stock of worm-eaten furniture, a chair or two on which it is dangerous to sit down, and at least as many arms as utensils; then leaves them: they seldom meet afterward.”

“But could not they be brought together by some friend of the mother?” said I, laughing.

“Aspasia,” answered he, “you have lived but few years in the world, and with only one philosopher—Yourself.”

“I will not be contented with a compliment,” said I, “and least of all from you. Explain to me the opinions of those about you.”

He traced before me the divergences of every sect—from our countryman Thales to those now living. Epimedeia sat with her eyes wide open, listening attentively. When he went away, I asked her what she thought of his discourse. She half closed her eyes, not from weariness, but (as many do) on bringing out of obscurity into light a notable discovery; and, laying her forefinger on my arm, “You have turned his head,” said she. “He will do no longer; he used to be plain and coherent; and now—did ever mortal talk so widely? I could not understand one word in twenty, and what I could understand was sheer nonsense.”

“Sweet Epimedeia!” said I, “this is what I should fancy to be no such easy matter.”

“Ah! you are growing like him already,” said she; “I should not be surprised to find, some morning, a cupola³⁸ at the top of this pretty head.”

[³⁸ “His person in other respects was well turned, but his head was disproportionately long. For this reason almost all his statues have the head covered with a helmet, the statuaries choosing, I suppose, to hide that defect.”—*Langhorne’s Plutarch—Pericles.*]

Pericles, I think I never told you, has a little elevation on the crown of his ; I should rather say his head has a crown, others have none.

XXXIV.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Do, my dear Aspasia, continue to write to me about the poets ; and if you think there is anything of Myrtis or Corinna, which is wanting to us at Miletus, copy it out. I do not always³⁹ approve of the Trilogies. Nothing can be more tiresome—hardly anything more wicked—than a few⁴⁰ of them. It may be well, occasionally, to give something of the historical form to the dramatic, as it is, occasionally, to give something of the dramatic to the historical ; but never to turn into ridicule and buffoonery the virtuous, the unfortunate, or the brave. Whatever the Athenians may boast of their exquisite judgment, their delicate perceptions, this is a perversion of intellect in its highest place, unworthy of a Thracian. There are many bad tragedies both of *Æschylus* and *Sophocles*, but none without beauties—few without excellencies. I tremble then at your doubt. In another century it may be impossible to find a collection of the whole, unless some learned and rich man, like Pericles, or some protecting king, like Hiero, should preserve them in his library.

XXXV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

PRUDENTLY have you considered how to preserve all valuable authors. The cedar doors of a royal library fly open to receive them : ay, there they will be safe—and untouched.

Hiero is, however, no barbarian. He deserves a higher station than a throne ; and he is raised to it. The protected

[³⁹ Not in 1st ed.]

[⁴⁰ First ed. : "many."]

have placed the protector where neither the malice of men nor the power of Gods can reach him—beyond Time—above Fate.

XXXVI.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

FROM the shortness of your last, I am quite certain that you are busy for me in looking out pieces of verse. If you cannot find any of Myrtis or Corinna, you may do what is better ; you may compose a panegyric on all of our sex who have excelled in poetry. This will earn for you the same good office, when the world shall produce another Aspasia.

Having been in Bœotia, you must also know a great deal more of Pindar than we do. Write about any of them ; they all interest me ; and my mind has need of exercise. It is still too fond of throwing itself down on one place.

XXXVII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

AND so, Cleone, you wish me to write a eulogy on Myrtis and Corinna, and all the other poetesses that ever lived ; and this is for the honour of our sex ! Ah, Cleone ! no studied eulogy does honour to any one. It is always considered, and always ought to be, as a piece of pleading, in which the pleader says everything the most in favour of his client, in the most graceful and impressive manner he can. There is a city of Greece, I hear, in which reciprocal flattery is so necessary, that, whenever a member of the assembly dies, his successor is bound to praise him before he takes the seat.⁴¹

I do not speak this from my own knowledge ; indeed I could hardly believe in such frivolity, until I asked Pericles if it were true ; or rather, if there were any foundation at all for the report.

“Perfectly true,” said he ; “but the citizens of this city

[⁴¹ Probably aimed at the French Academy.]

are now become our allies ; therefore do not curl your lip, or I must uncurl it, being an archon."

Myrtis and Corinna have no need of me. To read and recommend their works, to point out their beauties and defects, is praise enough.

"How!" methinks you exclaim. "To point out defects! is that praising?"

Yes, Cleone ; if with equal good faith and accuracy you point out their beauties too. It is only thus a fair estimate can be made ; and it is only by such fair estimate that a writer can be exalted to his proper station. If you toss up the scale too high, it descends again rapidly below its equipoise ; what it contains drops out, and people catch at it, scatter it, and lose it.

We not only are inclined to indulge in rather more than a temperate heat (of what we would persuade ourselves is wholesome severity) toward the living, but even to peer sometimes into the tomb, with a wolfish appetite for an unpleasant odour.

We must patronise, we must pull down ; in fact, we must be in mischief, men or women.

If we are capable of showing what is good in another, and neglect to do it, we omit a duty ; we omit to give rational pleasure, and to conciliate right good-will ; nay more, we are abettors, if not aiders, in the vilest fraud, the fraud of purloining from respect. We are entrusted with letters of great interest : what a baseness not to deliver them !

XXXVIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

IT is remarkable that Athens, so fertile in men of genius, should have produced no women of distinction ; while Bœotia, by no means celebrated for brightness of intellect in either sex, presented to the admiration of the world her Myrtis and Corinna. At the feet of Myrtis it was, that Pindar gathered into his throbbing breast the scattered seeds of poetry ; and it was under the smile of the beautiful Corinna that he drew his inspiration and wove his immortal crown.

He never quite overcame his grandiloquence. The animals we call *half-asses*, by a word of the sweetest sound, although not the most seducing import, he calls

“The daughters of the tempest-footed steeds!”⁴²

O Fortune! that the children of so illustrious a line should carry sucking-pigs into the market-place, and cabbage-stalks out of it!

XXXIX.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

WILL you always leave off, Aspasia, at the very moment you have raised our expectations to the highest? A witticism, and a sudden spring from your seat, lest we should see you smile at it—these are your ways; shame upon you! Are you determined to continue all your life in making every one wish something?

Pindar should not be treated like ordinary men.

XL.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I HAVE not treated Pindar like an ordinary man; I conducted him into the library of Cleone, and left him there. However, I would have my smile out, behind the door. The verse I quoted, you may be sure, is much admired by the learned, and no less by the brave and worthy men whom he celebrates for charioteership, and other such dexterities; but, we of old Miletus, have been always taught that words should be subordinate to ideas, and we never place the pedestal on the head of the statue.

Now, do not tell any body that I have spoken a single word

[⁴² Aristotle says of Simonides that “A man who had won a race with a team of mules offered him a small sum to write an ode in praise of their victory, but the poet declined to demean his art to praise a mule; when, however, a more suitable sum was offered, he then wrote ‘Hail ye daughters of the tempest-footed steeds;’ yet none the less were the mules still daughters of asses on the one side.”—*Rhetoric*, iii. 2. 1405.]

in dispraise of Pindar. Men are not too apt to admire what is admirable in their superiors, but, on the contrary, are apt to detract from them, and to seize on any thing which may tend to lower them. Pindar would not have written so exquisitely if no fault had ever been found with him. He would have wandered on among such inquiries as those he began in:—

“ *Shall I sing the wide-spreading and noble Ismenus? or the beautiful and white-ankled Melie? or the glorious Cadmus? or the mighty Hercules? or the blooming Bacchus?* ”

Now, a poet ought to know what he is about before he opens his lips. He ought not to ask, like a poor fellow in the street, “ *Good people! what song will you have?* ” This, however, was not the fault for which he was blamed by Corinna. In our censures, we are less apt to consider the benefit we may confer than the ingenuity we can display.

She said, “ *Pindar! you have brought a sack of corn to sow a perch of land; and, instead of sprinkling it about, you have emptied the sack at the first step.* ”

Enough: this reproof formed his character: it directed his beat, it singled his aim, it concentrated his forces. It was not by the precepts of Corinna, it was not by her example, it was by one witticism of a wise and lovely woman, that he far excels all other poets in disdain of triviality and choice of topics. He is sometimes very tedious to us in his long stories of families, but we may be sure he was not equally so to those who were concerned in the genealogy. We are amused at his cleverness in saving the shoulder of Pelops⁴⁸ from the devouring jaw of a hungry God. No doubt he mends the matter; nevertheless he tires us.

Many prefer his Dithyrambics to his Olympian, Isthmian, Pythian, and Nemean Odes: I do not; nor is it likely that he did himself. We may well suppose that he exerted the most power on the composition, and the most thought on the correction, of the poems he was to recite before kings and nations, in honour of the victors at those solemn games. Here the choruses and bands of music were composed of the first singers and players in the world; in the others there were no

[⁴⁸ See Mr E. Myers' translation of Pindar, p. 4, for the passage referred to.]

performers but such as happened to assemble on ordinary festivals, or at best at a festival of Bacchus. In the Odes performed at the games, although there is not always perfect regularity of corresponding verse, there is always enough of it to satisfy the most fastidious ear. In the Dithyrambics there is no order whatsoever, but verses and half-verses of every kind, cemented by vigorous and sounding prose.

I do not love dances upon stilts ; they may excite the applauses and acclamations of the vulgar, but we, Cleone, exact the observance of established rules, and never put on slippers, however richly embroidered, unless they pair.

XL.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

WE hear that between Athens and Syracuse there has always been much communication. Let me learn what you have been able to collect about the lives of Pindar and Æschylus in Sicily.

Is it not strange that the two most high-minded of poets should have gone to reside in a foreign land, under the dominion of a king ?

I am ashamed of my question already. Such men are under no dominion. It is not in their nature to offend against the laws, or to think about what they are, or who administers them ; and they may receive a part of their sustenance from kings, as well as from cows and bees. We will reproach them for emigration, when we reproach a man for lying down in his neighbour's field, because the grass is softer in it than in his own.

XLII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Nor an atom have I been able to collect in regard to the two poets, since they went to the court of Hiero ; but I can give you as correct and as full information as if I had been seated between them all the while.

Hiero was proud of his acquisition ; the courtiers despised

them, vexed them whenever they could, and entreated them to command their services and rely upon their devotion. What more? They esteemed each other; but poets are very soon too old for mutual love.

He who can add one syllable to this, shall have the hand of Cleone.

XLIII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

TORTURING girl! and you, Aspasia, may justly say, *ungrateful girl!* to me. You did not give me what I asked for, but you gave me what is better, a glimpse of you. This is the manner in which you used to trifle with me, making the heaviest things light, the thorniest tractable, and throwing your own beautiful brightness wherever it was most wanted.

But do not slip from me again. *Æschylus*, we know, is dead; we hear that Pindar is. Did they die abroad?

Ah poor Xeniares! how miserable to be buried by the stranger!

XLIV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Æschylus, at the close of his seventieth year, died in Sicily. I know not whether Hiero received him with all the distinction he merited, or rewarded him with the same generosity as Pindar; nor indeed have I been able to learn, what would very much gratify me, that Pindar, who survived him four years, and died lately, paid those honours to the greatest man of the most glorious age since earth rose out of chaos, which he usually paid with lavish hand to the prosperous and powerful. I hope he did; but the words *wealth* and *gold* occur too often in the poetry of Pindar.

Perhaps I may wrong him, for a hope is akin to a doubt; it may be that I am mistaken, since we have not all his poems even here in Athens. Several of these too, particularly the Dithyrambics, are in danger of perishing. The odes on the victors of the games will be preserved by the vanity of the

families they celebrate ; and, being thus safe enough for many years, their own merit will sustain them afterward. It is owing to a stout nurse that many have lived to an extreme old age.

Some of the odes themselves are of little value in regard to poetry, but he exercises in all of them as much dexterity as the worthies he applauds had displayed in their exploits.

To compensate the disappointment you complained of, I will now transcribe for you an ode of Corinna to her native town, being quite sure it is not in your collection. Let me first inform you that the exterior of the best houses in Tanagra is painted with historical scenes, adventures of Gods, allegories, and other things ; and under the walls of the city flows the Thermodon. This it is requisite to tell you of so small and so distant a place.

CORINNA TO TANAGRA.

From Athens.

1.

Tanagra ! think not I forget
 Thy beautifully-storied streets ;
 Be sure my memory bathes yet
 In clear Thermodon, and yet greets
 The blythe and liberal shepherd-boy,
 Whose sunny bosom swells with joy
 When we accept his matted rushes
 Upheav'd with sylvan fruit ; away he bounds, and blushes.

2.

A gift I promise : one I see
 Which [“] thou with transport wilt receive,
 The only proper gift for thee,
 Of which no mortal shall bereave
 In later times thy mouldering walls,
 Until the last old turret falls ;
 A crown, a crown from Athens won,
 A crown no God can wear, beside Latona's son.

3.

There may be cities who refuse
 To their own child the honours due,
 And look ungently on the Muse ;
 But ever shall those cities rue

[[“] First ed. : “ I promise to bring back with me what.”]

The dry, unyielding, niggard breast,
Offering no nourishment, no rest,
To that young head which soon shall rise
Disdainfully, in might and glory, to the skies.

4.

Sweetly where cavern'd Dirce⁴⁵ flows
Do white-arm'd maidens chaunt my lay,
Flapping the while with laurel-rose
The honey-gathering tribes away ;
And sweetly, sweetly, Attic tongues
Lisp your Corinna's early songs ;
To her with feet more graceful come
The verses that have dwelt in kindred breasts at home.

5.

O let thy children lean aslant
Against the tender mother's knee,
And gaze into her face, and want
To know what magic there can be
In words that urge some eyes to dance,
While others as in holy trance
Look up to heaven ; be such my praise !
Why linger ? I must haste, or lose the Delphic bays.

XLV.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

EPIMEDA, it appears, has not corrupted very grossly your purity and simplicity in dress. Yet, remembering your observation on armlets, I cannot but commend your kindness and sufferance in wearing her emeralds. Your opinion was formerly, that we should be careful not to subdivide our persons. The arm is composed of three parts ; no one of them is too long. Now the armlet intersects that portion⁴⁶ of it which must be considered as the most beautiful. In my idea of the matter, the sandal alone is susceptible of gems, after the zone has received the richest. The zone is necessary to our vesture, and encompasses the person, in every quarter of the

[⁴⁵ A fountain near Thebes.]

[⁴⁶ First ed. : "that very portion."]

humanized world, in one invariable manner. The hair too is divided by nature in the middle of the head. There is a cousinship between the hair and the flowers; and from this relation the poets have called by the same name the leaves and it. They appear on the head as if they had been seeking one another. Our national dress, very different from the dresses of barbarous nations, is not the invention of the ignorant or the slave; but the sculptor, the painter, and the poet, have studied how best to adorn the most beautiful object of their fancies and contemplations. The Indians, who believe that human pains and sufferings are pleasing to the deity, make incisions in their bodies, and insert into them imperishable colours. They also adorn the ears and noses and foreheads of their Gods. These were the ancestors of the Egyptian; we chose handsomer and better-tempered ones for our worship, but retained the same decorations in our sculpture, and to a degree which the sobriety of the Egyptian had reduced⁴⁷ and chastened. Hence we retain the only mark of barbarism which dishonours our national dress, the use of ear-rings. If our statues should all be broken by some convulsion of the earth, would it be believed by future ages that, in the country and age of Sophocles, the women tore holes in their ears to let rings into, as the more brutal of peasants do with the snouts of sows!

XLVI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

CLEONE, I do not know whether I ought to write out for you anything of Mimnermus. What is amatory poetry without its tenderness? and what was ever less tender than his? Take however the verses, such as they are. Whether they make you smile or look grave, without any grace of their own they must bring one forward. Certainly they are his best, which cannot be said of every author out of whose rarer works I have added something to your collection.

[⁴⁷ First ed.: "had merely reduced."]

I wish not Thasos rich in mines,
 Nor Naxos girt around with vines,
 Nor Crete, nor Samos,⁴⁸ the abodes
 Of those who govern men and Gods,
 Nor wider Lydia, where the sound
 Of tymbrels shakes the thymy ground,
 And with white feet and with hoofs cloven
 The dedal dance is spun and woven :
 Meanwhile each prying younger thing
 Is sent for water to the spring,
 Under where red Priapus rears
 His club amid the junipers ;
 In this whole world enough for me
 Is any spot the Gods decree ;
 Albeit the pious and the wise
 Would tarry where, like mulberries,
 In the first hour of ripeness fall
 The tender creatures, one and all.
 To take what falls with even mind
 Jove wills, and we must be resign'd.

XLVII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

THERE is less effrontery in those verses of Mimnermus than in most he has written. He is among the many poets who never make us laugh or weep ; among the many whom we take into the hand like pretty insects, turn them over, look at them for a moment, and toss them into the grass again. The earth swarms with these ; they live their season, and others similar come into life the next.

I have been reading works widely different from theirs ; the Odes of the lovely Lesbian. I think she has injured the phalecian⁴⁹ verse, by transposing one foot and throwing it backward. How greatly more noble and more sonorous are those hendecasyllabics commencing the Scholion on Harmodius

[⁴⁸ "The Samians believe that Hera was born in their island on the bank of the river Imbrasus, under the very agnus castus tree which grows there to this day near the temple of that goddess."—*Pausanias*, vii. 4. 3.]

[⁴⁹ "The change of metre introduced by Sappho may be seen by comparing the metre of Tennyson's "Oh, you chorus of indolent reviewers" with the true Sapphic line, "Heard the sudden thunder of wings behind her"—from Swinburne's "Sappho."]

and Aristogiton, than the very best of hers, which, to my ear, labor and shuffle in their movement. Her genius was wonderful, was prodigious. I am neither blind to her beauties nor indifferent to her sufferings. We love for ever those whom we have wept for when we were children: we love them more than even those who have wept for us. Now, I have grieved for Sappho, and so have you, Aspasia! we shall not therefore be hard judges of her sentiments or her poetry.

Frequently have we listened to the most absurd and extravagant praises of the answer she gave Alcæus, when he told her he wished to say something, but shame prevented him. This answer of hers is a proof that she was deficient in delicacy⁵⁰ and in tenderness. Could Sappho be ignorant how infantinely inarticulate is early love? Could she be ignorant that shame and fear seize it unrelentingly by the throat, while hard-hearted impudence stands at ease, prompt at opportunity, and profuse in declarations?

There is a gloom in deep love, as in deep water: there is a silence in it which suspends the foot; and the folded arms and the dejected head are the images it reflects. No voice shakes its surface: the Muses themselves approach it with a tardy and a timid step, and with a low and tremulous and melancholy song.

The best Ode of Sappho, the Ode to Anactoria,

“Happy as any God is he,” &c.

shows the intemperance and disorder of passion. The description of her malady may be quite correct, but I confess my pleasure ends at the first strophe, where it begins with the generality of readers. I do not desire to know the effects of the distemper on her body, and I run out of the house into the open air, although the symptoms have less in them of contagion than of unseemliness. Both Sophocles and Euripides excite our sympathies more powerfully and more poetically.

[⁵⁰ First ed.: “both in delicacy.” The question and answer are as under:—

Alcæus—Violet weaving, pure, softly smiling Sappho
I would say something did not shame prevent me.

Sappho—Were thy desire for fair and noble things,
Did not your tongue design some evil speech,
Shame would not dash your eyes,
But rightly would you say your desire.]

I will not interfere any farther with your reflections ; and indeed when I began, I intended to remark only the injustice of Sappho's reproof to Alcæus in the first instance, and the justice of it in the second, when he renewed his suit to her after he had fled from battle.¹ We find it in the only epigram attributed to her.

He who from battle runs away
 May pray and sing, and sing and pray ;
 Nathless, Alcæus, howsoe'er
 Dulcet his song and warm his pray'r
 And true his vows of love may be,
 He ne'er shall run away with me.

In my opinion no lover should be dismissed with contumely, or without the expression of commiseration, unless he has committed some bad action. O Aspasia ! it is hard to love, and not to be loved again. I felt it early ; I still feel it. There is a barb beyond the reach of dittany ; but years, as they roll by us, benumb in some degree our sense of suffering. Season comes after season, and covers as it were with soil and herbage the flints that have cut us so cruelly in our course.

XLVIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

ALCÆUS, often admirable in his poetry, was a vain-glorious and altogether worthless man. I must defend Sappho. She probably knew his character at the beginning, and sported a witticism (not worth much) at his expense. He made a pomp and parade of his generosity and courage, with which in truth he was² scantily supplied, and all his love lay commodiously at the point of his pen, among the rest his first.

He was unfit for public life, he was unfit for private. Perverse, insolent, selfish, he hated tyranny because he could not

[¹ From the battle in the Thracian Chersonese between the Mytilenians and the Athenians.

“ Safe came Alcæus thence ; but not his shield ;
 That in the temple of the grey-eyed goddess
 Athenian soldiers for a trophy hung.” — *Alcæus.*]

[² First ed. : “ but scantily.”]

be a tyrant. Sufficiently well-born, he was jealous and intolerant of those who were nothing less so, and he wished they were all poets that he might expose a weakness the more in them. For rarely has there been one, however virtuous, without some vanity and some invidiousness ; despiser of the humble, detractor of the high, iconoclast of the near, and idolater of the distant.

Return we to Alcæus. Factitious in tenderness, factitious in heroism, addicted to falsehood, and unabashed at his fondness for it, he attacked and overcame every rival in that quarter. He picked up all the arrows that were shot against him, re-cocted all the venom of every point, and was almost an Archilochus in satire.

I do not agree with you in your censure of Sappho. There is softness by the side of power, discrimination by the side of passion. In this, however, I do agree with you, that her finest ode is not to be compared to many choruses in the tragedians. We know that Sappho felt acutely ; yet Sappho is never pathetic. Euripides and Sophocles are not remarkable for their purity, the intensity, or the fidelity of their loves, yet they touch, they transfix, the heart. Her imagination, her whole soul, is absorbed in her own breast : *she* is the prey of the passions : *they* are the lords and masters.⁸

Sappho has been dead so long, and we live so far from Lesbos, that we have the fewer means of ascertaining the truth or falsehood of stories told about her. Some relate that she was beautiful, some that she was deformed. Lust, it is said, is frequently the inhabitant of deformity ; and coldness is experienced in the highest beauty. I believe the former case is more general than the latter, but where there is great regularity of features I have often remarked a correspondent regularity in the affections and the conduct.

XLIX.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Do you remember the lively Hegemon whose curls you pressed down with your forefinger to see them spring up again ? Do

[⁸ In 1st ed. this letter ends here.]

you remember his biting it for the liberty you had taken ; and his kissing it to make it well ; and his telling you that he was not quite sure whether some other kisses, here and there, might not be requisite to prevent the spreading of the venom ? And do you remember how you turned pale ? and how you laughed with me, as we went away, at his thinking you turned pale because you were afraid of it ? The boy of fifteen, as he was then, hath lost all his liveliness, all his assurance, all his wit ; and his radiant beauty has taken another character. His cousin Praxinoë, whom he was not aware of loving, until she was betrothed to Callias, a merchant of Samos, was married a few months ago. There are no verses I read oftener than the loose Dithyrambics of poor Hegemon. Do people love anywhere else as we love here at Miletus ? But perhaps the fondness of Hegemon may abate after a time ; for Hegemon is not a woman. How long and how assiduous are we in spinning that thread, the softest and finest in the web of life, which Destiny snaps asunder in one moment !

HEGEMON TO PRAXINOË.

Is there any season, O my soul,
When the sources of bitter tears dry up,
And the uprooted flowers take their places again
Along the torrent-bed ?

Could I wish to live, it would be for that season,
To repose my limbs and press my temples there.
But should I not speedily start away
In the hope to trace and follow thy steps !

Thou art gone, thou art gone, Praxinoë !
And hast taken far from me thy lovely youth,
Leaving me nought that was desirable in mine.
Alas ! alas ! what hast thou left me ?

The helplessness of childhood, the solitude of age,
The laughter of the happy, the pity of the scorner,
A colourless and broken shadow am I,
Seen glancing in troubled waters.

My thoughts too are scattered ; thou hast cast them off ;
They beat against thee, they would cling to thee,
But they are viler than the loose dark weeds,
Without a place to root or rest in.

I would throw them across my lyre ; they drop from it ;
 My lyre will sound only two measures ;
 That Pity will never, never come,
 Or come to the sleep that awakeneth not unto her.

L.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

TELL Hegemon that his verses have made a deeper impression than his bite, and that the Athenians, men and women, are pleased with them. He has shown that he is a poet, by not attempting to show that he is overmuch of one. Forbear to inform him that *we* Athenians disapprove of irregularity in versification : we are little pleased to be rebounded from the end of a line to the beginning, as it often happens, and to be obliged to turn back and make inquiries in regard to what we have been about. There have latterly been many compositions in which it is often requisite to read twice over the verses which have already occupied more than a due portion of our time in reading once. The hop-skip-and-jump is by no means a pleasant or a graceful exercise, but it is quite intolerable when we invert it to a jump-skip-and-hop. I take some liberty in these strange novel compounds, but no greater than our friend Aristophanes has taken, and not only without reproof or censure, but with great commendation for it. However, I have done it for the first and last time, and before the only friend with whom they can be pardonable. Henceforward, I promise you, Cleone, I will always be Attic, or what is gracefuller and better,⁴ Ionian. You shall for ever hear my voice in my letters, and you shall know it to be mine, and mine only. Already I have had imitators in the style of my conversations, but they have imitated others too, and this hath saved me. In mercy and pure beneficence to me, the Gods have marred the resemblance. Nobody can recognise me in my metempsychosis. Those who had hoped and heard better of me, will never ask themselves, "Was Aspasia so wordy, so inelegant, affected, and perverse ?" Inconsiderate friends have hurt me worse than enemies could do : they have

[⁴ First ed. : " better still."]

hinted that the orations⁵ of Pericles have been retouched by my pen. Cleone! the Gods themselves could not correct his language. Human ingenuity, with all the malice and impudence that usually accompany it, will never be able to remodel a single sentence, or to substitute a single word, in his speeches to the people. What wealth of wisdom has he not thrown away lest it encumber him in the Agora! How much more than ever was carried into it by the most popular of his opponents! Some of my expressions may have escaped from him in crowded places; some of his cling to me in retirement: we cannot love without imitating; and we are as proud in the loss of our originality as of our freedom. I am sorry that poor Hegemon has not had an opportunity of experiencing all this. Persuade his friends never to pity him, truly or feignedly, for pity keeps the wound open: persuade them rather to flatter him on his poetry, for never was there poet to whom the love of praise was not the first and most constant of passions. His friends will be the gainers by it: he will divide among them all the affection he fancies he has reserved for Praxinoë. With most men, nothing seems to have happened so long ago as an affair of love. Let nobody hint this to him at present. It is among the many truths that ought to be held back; it is among the many that excite a violent opposition at one time, and obtain at another (not much later) a very ductile acquiescence; he will receive it hereafter (take my word for him) with only one slight remonstrance—*you are too hard upon us lovers*: then follows a shake of the head, not of abnegation, but of sanction, like Jupiter's.

Praxinoë, it seems, is married to a merchant, poor girl! I

[⁵ “SOCRATES: That I should be able to speak is no great wonder, Menexenus, considering that I have an excellent mistress in the art of rhetoric,—she who made so many good speakers, and one who was the best among the Hellenes—Pericles, the son of Xanthippus.

“MENEXENUS: And who is she? I suppose you mean Aspasia.

“SOCRATES: Yes, I do . . . But yesterday I heard Aspasia composing a funeral speech for the dead. For she had been told, as you were saying, that the Athenians were going to choose a speaker, and she repeated the sort of speech which he should deliver, partly improvising and partly from previous thought, putting together fragments of the funeral oration which Pericles spoke and she, I believe, composed.”

—Menexenus. *Jowett's Dialogues of Plato.*]

do not like these merchants. Let them have wealth in the highest, but not beauty in the highest ; cunning and calculation can hardly merit both. At last they may aspire, if any civilised country could tolerate it, to honours and distinctions. These too let them have, but at Tyre and Carthage.

LI.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

How many things in poetry, as in other matters, are likely to be lost because they are small ! Cleobuline of Lindos wrote no long poem. Her lover was Cycnus of Colophon. There is not a single verse of her's in all that city ; proof enough that he took no particular care of them. At Miletus she was quite unknown, not indeed by name, but in her works until the present month, when a copy of them was offered to me for sale. The first that caught my eyes was this :

Where is the swan of breast so white
It made my bubbling life run bright
On that one spot, and that alone,
On which he rested ; and I stood
Gazing : now swells the turbid flood ;
Summer and he for other climes are flown !

I will not ask you at present to say anything in praise of Cleobuline, but do be grateful to Myrtis and Corinna !

LII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

GRATEFUL I am, and shall for ever be, to Myrtis and Corinna ; but what odour of bud or incense can they wish to be lavished on the empty sepulchre, what praises of the thousand who praise in ignorance, or of the learned who praise from tradition, when they remember that they subdued and regulated the proud unruly Pindar, and agitated with all their passion the calm pure breast of Cleone !

Send me the whole volume of Cleobuline ; transcribe nothing more. To compensate you as well as I can, and indeed I think the compensation is not altogether an unfair one, here are two little pieces from Myrtis, autographs, from the library of Pericles.

Artemia, while Arion sighs,
Raising her white and taper finger,
Pretends to loose, yet makes to linger,
The ivy that o'ershades her eyes.

“Wait, or you shall not have the kiss,”
Says she; but he, on wing to pleasure,
“Are there not other hours for leisure?
For love is any hour like this?”

Artemia! faintly thou respondest,
As falsely deems that fiery youth;
A God there is who knows the truth,
A God who tells me which is fondest.

Here is another, in the same hand, a clear and elegant one. Men may be negligent in their hand-writing, for men may be in a hurry about the business of life; but I never knew either a sensible woman or an estimable one whose writing was disorderly.

Well, the verses are prettier than my reflection, and equally true.

I will not love!
These sounds have often
Burst from a troubled breast;
Rarely from one no sighs could soften,
Rarely from one at rest.

Myrtis and Corinna, like Anacreon and Sappho who preceded them, were temperate in the luxuries of poetry. They had enough to do with one feeling; they were occupied enough with one reflection. They culled but few grapes from the bunch, and never dragged it across the teeth, stripping off ripe and unripe.

LIII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

THE verses of Myrtis, which you sent me last, are somewhat less pleasing to me than those others of hers which I send you in return. A few loose ideas on the subject (I know not whether worth writing) occur to me at this moment. Formerly we were contented with schools of philosophy; we

now begin to talk about schools of poetry. Is not that absurd ? There is only one school, the universe ; one only school-mistress, Nature. Those who are reported to be of such or such a school, are of none, they have played the truant. Some are more careful, some more negligent, some bring many dishes, some fewer, some little seasoned, some highly. Ground however there is for the fanciful appellation. The young poets at Miletus are beginning to throw off their allegiance to the established and acknowledged laws of Athens, and are weary of following in the train of the graver who have been crowned. The various schools, as they call them, have assumed distinct titles ; but the largest and most flourishing of all would be discontented, I am afraid, with the poorest I could inscribe it with, the *queer*. We really have at present in our city more good poets than we ever had ; and the *queer* might be among the best if they pleased. But whenever an obvious and natural thought presents itself, they either reject it for coming without imagination, or they *phrygianize* it with such biting and hot curling-irons, that it rolls itself up impenetrably. They declare to us that pure and simple imagination is the absolute perfection of poetry ; and if ever they admit a sentence or reflection, it must be one which requires a whole day to unravel and wind it smoothly on the distaff.

To me it appears that poetry ought neither to be all body nor all soul. Beautiful features, limbs compact, sweetness of voice, and easiness of transition, belong to the Deity who inspires and represents it. We may loiter by the stream and allay our thirst as it runs, but we should not be forbidden the larger draught from the deeper well.

FROM MYRTIS.

Friends, whom she look'd at blandly from her couch
 And her white wrist above it, gem-bedewed,
 Were arguing with Pentheusa : she had heard
 Report of Creon's death, whom years before
 She listened to, well-pleas'd ; and sighs arose ;
 For sighs full often fondle with reproofs
 And will be fondled by them.

When I came,
After the rest, to visit her, she said,

*Myrtis ! how kind ! Who better knows than thou
The pangs of love ? and my first love was he !*

Tell me, if ever, Eros ! are reveal'd
Thy secrets to the earth, have they been true
To any love who speak about the first ?
What ! shall these holier lights, like twinkling stars
In the few hours assign'd them, change their place,
And, when comes ampler splendour, disappear ?
Idler I am, and pardon, not reply,
Implore from thee, thus questioned ; well I know
Thou strikest, like Olympian Jove, but once.

LIV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

LYSICLES, a young Athenian, fond of travelling, has just returned to us from a voyage in Thrace.⁶ A love of observation, in other words curiosity, could have been his only motive, for he never was addicted to commerce, nor disciplined in philosophy ; and indeed were he so, Thrace is hardly the country he would have chosen. I believe he is the first that ever travelled with no other intention than to see the cities and know the manners of barbarians. He represents the soil as extremely fertile in its nature, and equally well cultivated, and the inhabitants as warlike, hospitable, and courteous. All this is credible enough, and perhaps as generally known as might be expected of regions so remote and perilous. But Lysicles will appear to you to have assumed a little more than the fair privileges of a traveller, in relating that the people have so imperfect a sense of religion as to bury the dead in the temples of the Gods, and the priests so avaricious and shameless as to claim money for the permission of this impiety. He told us, furthermore, that he had seen a magnificent temple, built on somewhat of a Grecian model, in the interior of which there are many flat marbles fastened with iron cramps against the walls, and serving for monuments.

[⁶ Probably these Thracian institutions are more likely to be discoverable in England than in that country.]

Continuing his discourse, he assured us that these monuments, although none are ancient, are of all forms and dimensions, as if the Thracians were resolved to waste and abolish the symmetry they had adopted, and that they are inscribed in an obsolete language; so that the people whom they might animate and instruct, by recording brave and virtuous actions, pass them carelessly by, breaking off now and then a nose from a conqueror, and a wing from an agathodemon.

Thrace is governed by many princes. One of them, Teres an Odrysan,⁷ has gained great advantages in war. No doubt, this is uninteresting to you, but it is necessary to the course of my narration. Will you believe it? yet Lysicles is both intelligent and trustworthy—will you believe that, at the return of the Thracian prince to enjoy the fruits of his victory, he ordered an architect to build an arch for himself and his army to pass under, on their road into the city? As if a road, on such an occasion, ought not rather to be widened than narrowed! If you will not credit this of a barbarian, who is reported to be an intelligent and prudent man in other things, you will exclaim, I fear, against the exaggeration of Lysicles and my credulity, when I relate to you on his authority that, to the same conqueror, by his command, there has been erected a column sixty cubits high, supporting his effigy in marble!

Imagine the general of an army standing upon a column of sixty cubits to show himself! A crane might do it after a victory over a pigmy; or it might aptly represent the virtues of a rope-dancer, exhibiting how little he was subject to dizziness.

I will write no more about it, for really I am beginning to think that some pretty Thracian has given poor Lysicles a love-potion, and that it has affected his brain.⁸

[⁷ Teres not only governed the larger part of Thrace, but influenced many of the free and independent states in that country, and led into the field the Getæ, the Agrianians, the Leæans, and the Pœonians. [First ed.: "Thucydides says that to coast his kingdom required four days and four nights for the swiftest vessel sailing before the wind; and that by land an expeditious walker would hardly cross it in thirteen days."] Sitalces, the son of Teres, ravaged all Macedonia in the reign of Perdiccas.]

[⁸ In 1st ed.: "affected his brain a little."]

LV.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

NEVER will I believe that a people, however otherwise ignorant and barbarous, yet capable of turning a regular arch and of erecting a lofty column, can be so stupid and absurd as you have represented. What ! bury dead bodies in the temples ! cast them out of their own houses into the houses of the Gods ! Depend upon it, Aspasia, they were the bones of victims ; and the strange uncouth inscriptions commemorate votive offerings, in the language of the priests, whatever it may be. So far is clear. Regarding the arch, Lysicles saw them removing it, and fancied they were building it. This mistake is really ludicrous. The column, you must have perceived at once, was erected, not to display the victor, but to expose the vanquished. A blunder very easy for an idle traveller to commit. Few of the Thracians, I conceive, even in the interior, are so utterly ignorant of Grecian arts, as to raise a statue at such a height above the ground, that the vision shall not comprehend all the features easily, and the spectator see and contemplate the object of his admiration, as nearly and in the same position as he was used to do in the Agora.

The monument of the greatest man should be only a bust and a name. If the name alone is insufficient to illustrate the bust, let them both perish.

Enough about Thracians ; enough about tombs and monuments. Two pretty Milesians, Agapenthe and Peristera, who are in love with you for loving me, are quite resolved to kiss your hand. You must not detain them long with you : Miletus is not to send all her beauty to be kept at Athens. We have no such treaty.

LVI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

THERE is such a concourse of philosophers, all anxious to show Alcibiades the road to Virtue, that I am afraid they will completely block it up before him. Among the rest is my old friend Socrates, who seems resolved to transfer to him all the

philosophy he designed for me, with very little of that which I presented to him in return.

And (would you believe it?) Alcibiades, who began with ridiculing him, now attends to him with as much fondness as Hyacinthus did to Apollo. The graver and uglier philosophers, however they differ on other points, agree in these; that beauty does not reside in the body, but in the mind; that philosophers are the only true heroes; and that heroes alone are entitled to the privilege of being implicitly obeyed by the beautiful.

Doubtless there may be very fine pearls in very uninviting shells; but our philosophers never wade knee-deep into the beds, attracted rather to what is bright externally.

LVII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

ALCIBIADES ought not to have captious or inquisitive men about him. I know not what the sophists are good for; I only know they are the very worst instructors. Logic, however unperverted, is not for boys; argumentation is among the most dangerous of early practices, and sends away both fancy and modesty. The young mind should be nourished with simple and grateful food, and not too copious. It should be little exercised until its nerves and muscles show themselves, and even then rather for air than anything else. Study is the bane of boyhood, the aliment of youth, the indulgence of manhood, and the restorative of age.

I am confident that persons like you and Pericles see little of these sharpers who play tricks upon words. It is amusing to observe how they do it, once or twice. As there are some flowers which you should smell but slightly to extract all that is pleasant in them, and which, if you do otherwise, emit what is unpleasant or noxious, so there are some men with whom a slight acquaintance is quite sufficient to draw out all that is agreeable, a more intimate one would be unsatisfactory and unsafe.

LVIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

PERICLES rarely says he likes anything ; but whenever he is pleased, he expresses it by his countenance, although when he is displeased he never shows it, even by the faintest sign. It was long before I ventured to make the observation to him. He replied,

“ It would be ungrateful and ungentle not to return my thanks for any pleasure imparted to me, when a smile has the power of conveying them. I never say that a thing pleases me while it is yet undone or absent, lest I should give somebody the trouble of performing or producing it. As for what is displeasing, I really am very insensible in general to matters of this nature ; and when I am not so, I experience more of satisfaction in subduing my feeling than I ever felt of displeasure at the occurrence which excited it. Politeness is in itself a power, and takes away the weight and galling from every other we may exercise. I foresee,” he added, “ that Alcibiades will be an elegant man, but I apprehend he will never be a polite one. There is a difference, and a greater than we are apt to perceive or imagine. Alcibiades would win without conciliating : he would seize and hold, but would not acquire. The man who is determined to keep others fast and firm, must have one end of the bond about his own breast, sleeping and waking.”

LIX.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

AGAPENTHE and Peristera, the bearers of your letter, came hither in safety and health, late as the season is for navigation. They complain of our cold climate in Athens, and shudder at the sight of snow upon the mountains in the horizon.

Hardly had they been with me, before the housewives and sages were indignant at their effrontery. In fact, they gazed in wonder at the ugliness of our sex in Attica, and at the gravity of philosophers, of whom stories so ludicrous are related. I do not think I shall be able to find them lovers

here. Peristera⁹ hath lost a little of her dove-like faculty (if ever she had much), at the report which has been raised about her cousin and herself. Dracontides was very fond of Agapenthe ; she, however, was by no means so fond of him, which is always the case when young men would warm us at their fire before ours is kindled. For, honestly to confess the truth, the very best of us are more capricious than sensitive, and more sensitive than grateful. Dracontides is not indeed a man to excite so delightful a feeling. He is confident that Peristera must be the cause of Agapenthe's disinclination to him ; for how is it possible that a young girl of unperverted mind could be indifferent to Dracontides ? Unable to discover that any sorceress was employed against him, he turned his anger toward Peristera, and declared in her presence that her malignity alone could influence so abusively the generous mind of Agapenthe. At my request the playful girl consented to receive him. Seated upon an amphora in the aviary, she was stroking the neck of a noble peacock, while the bird pecked at the berries on a branch of arbutus in her bosom. Dracontides entered, conducted by Peristera, who desired her cousin to declare at once whether it was by any malignity of her's that he had hitherto failed to conciliate her regard.

“ O the ill-tempered, frightful man ! ” cried Agapenthe ; “ does any body that is not malicious ever talk of malignity ? ”

Dracontides went away, calling upon the Gods for justice.

The next morning a rumour ran throughout Athens,¹⁰ how he had broken off his intended nuptials, on the discovery that Aspasia had destined the two Ionians to the pleasures of Pericles. Moreover, he had discovered that one of them, he would not say which, had certainly threads of several colours in her threadcase, not to mention a lock of hair, whether of a dead man or no, might by some be doubted ; and that the other was about to be consigned to Pyrilampes, in exchange for a peacock and sundry smaller birds.

[⁹ “ Peristera ” is the Greek for “ dove.”]

[¹⁰ These scandals were actually current in Athens.—See Plutarch's *Life of Pericles*, and Mahaffy's *Greek Life and Thought* for a rather improbable explanation of them.]

No question could be entertained of the fact, for the girls were actually in the house, and the birds in the aviary.

Agapenthe declares she waits only for the spring, and will then leave Athens for her dear Miletus, where she never heard such an expression as malignity.

“O what rude people the Athenians are ! ” said she.

LX.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

RATHER than open my letter again, I write another.

Agapenthe’s heart is won by Mnasylus. I never suspected it.

On his return out of Thessaly (whither I fancy he went on purpose) he brought a cage of nightingales. There are few of them in Attica ; and none being kept tame, none remain with us through the winter. Of the four brought by Mnasylus, one sings even in this season of the year. Agapenthe and Peristera were awakened in the morning by the song ¹¹ of a bird, like a nightingale, in the aviary. They went down together ; and over the door they found these verses.

Maiden or youth, who standest here,
Think not, if haply we should fear
A stranger’s voice or stranger’s face,
(Such is the nature of our race,)
That we would gladly fly again
To gloomy wood or windy plain.
Certain we are we ne’er should find
A care so provident, so kind,
Altho’ by flight we reposest
The tenderest mother’s warmest nest.
O may you prove, as well as we,
That even in Athens there may be
A sweeter thing than liberty.

“This is surely the handwriting of Mnasylus,” said Agapenthe.

“How do you know his hand-writing ? ” cried Peristera.
A blush and a kiss, and one gentle push, were the answer.

[¹¹ First ed. : “thrilling song.”]

Mnasylus, on hearing the sound of footsteps, had retreated behind a thicket of laurustine and pyracanthus, in which the aviary is situated, fearful of bringing the gardener into reproof for admitting him. However, his passion was uncontrollable ; and Peristera declares, although Agapenthe denies it, that he caught a kiss upon each of his cheeks by the interruption. Certain it is, for they agree in it, that he threw his arms around them both as they were embracing, and implored them to conceal the fault of poor old Alcon, " who shewed me," said he, " more pity than Agapenthe will ever shew me."

" Why did you bring these birds hither ? " said she, trying to frown.

" Because you asked," replied he, " the other day, whether we had any in Attica, and told me you had many at home."

She turned away abruptly, and, running up to my chamber, would have informed me why.

Superfluous confidence ! Her tears wetted my cheek.

" Agapenthe ! " said I, smiling, " are you sure you have cried for the last time, *O ! what rude people the Athenians are !*"

LXI.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

I APPREHEND, O Pericles, not only that I may become an object of jealousy and hatred to the Athenians, by the notice you have taken of me, but that you yourself, which affects me greatly more, may cease to retain the whole of their respect and veneration.

Whether, to acquire a great authority over the people, some things are not necessary to be done on which Virtue and Wisdom are at variance, it becomes not me to argue or consider ; but let me suggest the inquiry to you, whether he who is desirous of supremacy should devote the larger portion of his time to one person.

Three affections of the soul predominate ; Love, Religion, and Power. The first two are often united ; the other stands widely apart from them, and neither is admitted nor seeks admittance to their society. I wonder then how you can love

so truly and tenderly. Ought I not rather to say I *did* wonder? Was Pisistratus¹² affectionate? Do not be angry? It is certainly the first time a friend has ever ventured to discover a resemblance, although you are habituated to it from your opponents. In these you forgive it; do you in me?

LXII.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

PISISTRATUS was affectionate: the rest of his character you know as well as I do. You know that he was eloquent, that he was humane, that he was contemplative, that he was learned; that he not only was profuse to men of genius, but cordial, and that it was only with such men he was familiar and intimate. You know that he was the greatest, the wisest, the most virtuous, excepting Solon and Lycurgus, that ever ruled any portion of the human race. Is it not happy and glorious for mortals, when, instead of being led by the ears, under the clumsy and violent hand of vulgar and clamorous adventurers, a Pisistratus leaves the volumes of Homer and the conversation of Solon, for them?

We may be introduced to Power by Humanity, and at first may love her less for her own sake than for Humanity's, but by degrees we become so accustomed to her as to be quite uneasy without her.

Religion and Power, like the Cariatides in sculpture, never face one another; they sometimes look the same way, but oftener stand back to back.

[¹² "Pericles in his youth stood in great fear of the people. For in his countenance he was like Pisistratus the Tyrant and he perceived the old men were much struck by a further resemblance in the sweetness of his voice, the volubility of his tongue, and the roundness of his periods The comic writers abuse him in a most malignant manner, giving his friends the name of the new Pisistridæ."—*Pericles, Langhorne's Plutarch.* "Pisistratus had an affable and engaging manner. He was a liberal benefactor to the poor, and even to his enemies he behaved with great candour. He counterfeited so dexterously the good qualities which nature had denied him, that he gained more credit than the real possessors of them, and stood foremost in the public esteem in point of moderation and equity."—*Langhorne's Plutarch, Solon.*]

We will argue about them one at a time, and about the other in the triad too ; let me have the choice.

LXIII.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

We must talk over again the subject of your letter ; no, not talk, but write about it.

I think, Pericles, you who are so sincere with me, are never quite sincere with others. You have contracted this bad habitude from your custom of addressing the people. But among friends and philosophers, would it not be better to speak exactly as we think, whether ingeniously or not ? Ingenious things, I am afraid, are never perfectly true : however, I would not exclude them, the difference being very wide between perfect truth and violated truth ; I would not even leave them in a minority ; I would hear and say as many as may be, letting them pass current for what they are worth. Anaxagoras rightly remarked that Love always makes us better, Religion sometimes, Power never.

LXIV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

PERICLES was delighted with your letter on education. I wish he were as pious as you are ; occasionally he appears so. I attacked him on his simulation, but it produced a sudden and powerful effect on Alcibiades. You will collect the whole from a summary of our conversation.

“ So true,”¹⁸ said he, “ is the remark of Anaxagoras, that it was worth my while to controvert it. Did you not observe the attention paid to it by young and old ? I was unwilling that the graver part of the company should argue to-morrow with Alcibiades, on the nature of love, as they are apt to do, and should persuade him that he would be the better for it.

“ On this consideration, I said, while you were occupied, ‘ O Anaxagoras ! if we of this household knew not how

[¹⁸ First ed. : “ very true.”]

religious a man you are, your discourse would in some degree lead us to countenance the suspicion¹⁴ of your enemies. Religion is never too little for us ; it satisfies all the desires of the soul. Love is but an atom of it, consuming and consumed by the stubble on which it falls. But when it rests upon the Gods, it partakes of their nature, in its essence pure and eternal. Love indeed works great miracles. Like the ocean, Love embraces the earth ; and by Love, as by the ocean, whatever is sordid and unsound is borne away.”¹⁵

“ ‘Love indeed works great marvels,’ said Anaxagoras, ‘but I doubt whether the ocean, in such removals, may not peradventure be the more active of the two.’ ”¹⁶

“ ‘Acknowledge at least,’ said I, ‘that the flame of Love purifies the temple it burns in.’ ”¹⁷

“ Only when first lighted,” said Anaxagoras. “ Generally the heat is either spent or stifling soon afterward ; and the torch, when it is extinguished, leaves an odour very different from myrrh and frankincense.”

“ I think, Aspasia, you entered while he was speaking these words.”¹⁸

He had turned the stream. Pericles then proceeded.

“ Something of power,” said he, “ hath been consigned to me by the favour and indulgence of the Athenians. I do not dissemble that I was anxious to obtain it ; I do not dissemble that my vows and supplications for the prosperity of the country were unremitting. It pleased the Gods to turn toward me the eyes of my fellow citizens, but had they not blessed me with religion they never would have blessed me with power, better and more truly called an influence on their hearts and their reason, a high and secure place in the acropolis of their affections. Yes, Anaxagoras ! yes, Medon ! I do say, had they not *blessed* me with it ; for, in order to obtain it, I was obliged to place a daily and a nightly watch over my¹⁷ thoughts and actions. In proportion as authority

[¹⁴ First ed. : “ suspicions.”]

[¹⁵ In 1st ed. : “ As in the ocean that embraces the earth, whatever is sordid is borne away and disappears in it, so the flame of love purifies the temple it burns in.” “ Only,” etc.]

[¹⁶ This sentence does not occur in the 1st ed.]

[¹⁷ First ed. : “ all my thoughts.”]

was consigned to me, I found it both expedient and easy to grow better, time not being left me for sedentary occupations or frivolous pursuits, and every desire being drawn on and absorbed in that mighty and interminable, that rushing, renovating, and purifying one, which comprehends our country. If any young man would win to himself the hearts of the wise and brave, and is ambitious of being the guide and leader of them, let him be assured that his virtue will give him power, and power will consolidate and maintain his virtue. Let him never then squander away the inestimable hours of youth in tangled and trifling disquisitions, with such as perhaps have an interest in perverting or unsettling his opinions, and who speculate into his sleeping thoughts and dandle his nascent passions ; but let him start from them with alacrity, and walk forth with firmness ; let him early take an interest in the business and concerns of men ; and let him, as he goes along, look steadfastly at the statues of those who have benefited his country, and make with himself a solemn compact to stand hereafter among them."

I had heard the greater part of this already, all but the commencement. At the conclusion Alcibiades left the room ; I feared he was conscious that something in it was too closely applicable to him. How I rejoiced when I saw him enter again, with a helmet like Pallas's on his head, a spear in his hand, crying, "To Sparta, boys ! to Sparta ! "

Pericles whispered to me, but in a voice audible to those who sate farther off, "Alcibiades, I trust, is destined to abolish the influence and subvert the power of that restless and troublesome rival."

LXV.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

I DISBELIEVE, O Pericles, that it is good for us, that it is good for men, women, or nations, to be without a rival.

Acquit me now of any desire that, in your generosity, you should resolve on presenting me with such a treasure, for I am without the ability of returning it. But have you never observed how many graces of person and demeanour we women

are anxious to display, in order to humble a rival, which we were unconscious of possessing until opposite charms provoked them?

Sparta can only be humbled by the prosperity and liberality of Athens. She was ever jealous and selfish; Athens has been too often so. It is only by forbearance toward dependent states, and by kindness toward the weaker, that her power can long preponderate. Strong attachments are strong allies. This truth is so clear as to be colourless, and I should fear that you would censure me for writing what almost a child might have spoken, were I ignorant that its importance hath¹⁸ made little impression on the breasts of statesmen. I admire your wisdom in resolving to increase no farther the domains of Attica; to¹⁹ surround her with the outworks of islands, and²⁰ more closely with small independent communities. It is only from such as these that virtue can come forward neither hurt nor heated; the crowd is too dense for her in larger. But what is mostly our consideration, it is only such as these that are sensible of benefits. They cling to you afflictedly in your danger; the greater [look on with folded arms, nod knowingly, cry *sad work!* when you are worsted, and turn their backs on you when you are fallen.

LXVI.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

THERE are things, Aspasia, beyond the art of Phidias. He may represent Love leaning upon his bow and listening to Philosophy; but not for hours together: he may represent Love, while he is giving her a kiss for her lesson, tying her arms behind her: loosing them again must be upon another marble.

LXVII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

THE philosophers are less talkative in our conversations, now Alcibiades has given up his mind to mathematics and strategy, and seldom comes among them.

[¹⁸ First ed.: "the important truth has."]

[¹⁹ First ed.: "and in designing to."]

[²⁰ First ed.: "and to encompass her."]

Pericles told me they will not pour out the rose-water for their beards, unless into a Corinthian or golden vase.

“ But take care,” added he, “ to offend no philosopher of any sect whatever. Indeed, to offend any person is the next foolish thing to being offended. I never do it, unless when it is requisite to discredit somebody who might otherwise have the influence to diminish my estimation. Politeness is not always a sign of wisdom ; but the want of it always leaves room for a suspicion of folly, if folly and imprudence are the same. I have scarcely had time to think of any blessings that entered my house with you, beyond those which encompass myself ; yet it cannot but be obvious that Alcibiades hath now an opportunity of improving his manners, such as even the society of scholastic men will never countervail. This is a high advantage on all occasions, particularly in embassies. Well-bred men require it, and let it pass : the ill-bred catch at it greedily ; as fishes are attracted from the mud, and netted, by the shine of flowers and shells.”

LXVIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

At last I have heard him speak ²¹ in public.

Apollo may shake the rocks of Delphi, and may turn the pious pale ; my Pericles rises with serenity ; his voice hath at once left his lips and entered the heart of Athens. The violent and desperate tremble in every hostile city ; a thunder-bolt seems to have split in the centre, and to have scattered its sacred fire unto the whole circumference of Greece.

The greatest of prodigies are the prodigies of a mortal ; they are, indeed, the only ones : with the Gods there are none.

Alas ! alas ! the eloquence and the wisdom, the courage and the constancy of my Pericles, must have their end ; and

[²¹ “ For adding, as the divine Plato expresses it, the loftiness of the imagination and all commanding energy, with which Philosophy supplied him, to the native powers of genius, and making use of whatever he found to his purpose in the study of nature to dignify the art of speaking, he far excelled all other orators.”—*Langhorne’s Plutarch, Pericles.*]

the glorious shrine, wherein they stand pre-eminent, must one day drop into the deformity of death !

O Aspasia ! of the tears thou art shedding, tears of pride, tears of fondness, are there none (in those many) for thyself ? Yes ; whatever was attributed to thee of grace or beauty, so valuable for his sake whose partiality assigned them to thee, must go first, and all that he loses is a loss to thee ! weep then on.

LXIX.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

Do you love me ? do you love me ? Stay, reason upon it, sweet Aspasia ! doubt, hesitate, question, drop it, take it up again, provide, raise obstacles, reply directly. Oracles are sacred, and there is a pride in being a diviner.

LXX.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

I WILL do none of those things you tell me to do ; but I will say something you forgot to say, about the insufficiency of Phidias.

He may represent a hero with unbent brows, a sage with the lyre of Poetry in his hand, Ambition with her face half-averted from the City, but he cannot represent, in the same sculpture, at the same distance, Aphrodite higher than Pallas. He would be derided if he did ; and a great man can never do that for which a little man may deride him.

I shall love you even more than I do, if you will love yourself more than me. Did ever lover talk so ? Pray tell me, for I have forgotten all they ever talked about. But, Pericles ! Pericles ! be careful to lose nothing of your glory, or you lose all that can be lost of me ; my pride, my happiness, my content ; everything but my poor weak love : keep glory then for my sake !

LXXI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I AM not quite certain that you are correct in your decision, on the propriety of sculpturing the statues of our deities from one sole material. Those, however, of mortals and nymphs and Genii should be marble, and marble only. But you will pardon a doubt, a long doubt, a doubt for the chin to rest upon in the palm of the hand, when Cleone thinks one thing and Phidias another. I debated with Pericles on the subject.

“In my opinion,” said he, “no material for statuary is so beautiful as marble; and, far from allowing that two or more materials should compose one statue, I would not willingly see an interruption made in the figure of a God or Goddess, even by the folds of drapery. I would venture to take the cestus²² from Venus, distinguishing her merely by her own peculiar beauty. But in the representations of the more awful Powers, who are to be venerated and worshipped as the patrons and protectors of cities, we must take into account the notions of the people. In their estimate, gold and ivory²³ give splendour and dignity to the Gods themselves, and our wealth displays their power! Beside . . . but bring your ear closer . . . when

[²² “Therewith from her breast she (Aphrodite) loosed the broidered girdle, fair wrought, wherein are all her enchantments; therein are love and desire and loving converse, that steals the wits even of the wise.”—*Iliad*, xiv. 216. *Messrs Lang, Leaf and Myers' translation.*]

[²³ SOCRATES.—Then when I agree that Phidas is a good workman, “Well,” he will say, “do you think Phidas was ignorant of the Beautiful you talk of?” “Why in the name of goodness?” I shall ask. “Because he did not make the eyes of Athene of gold, nor the rest of the face, nor the feet, nor the hands, but of ivory,” he will answer: “if, as you say, it would have looked most beautiful in gold. Plainly he made the mistake through want of culture, because he was unaware that gold is the substance which makes everything beautiful wherever it appears.” When he says this, what answer are we to make, Hippias?” HIPPIAS.—No difficulty. We will say that he made it right; for I conceive that ivory is beautiful too. SOCRATES.—“For what reason, then,” he will ask, “did he make the centres of the eyes not of ivory but of stone, taking care to get as great a similarity as possible in the stone to the ivory? Is beautiful stone also a beautiful thing?” Shall we say yes, Hippias? HIPPIAS.—Yes, certainly—when it is in place.—*Plato, Hippias Major.*]

they will not indulge us with their favour, we may borrow their cloaks and ornaments, and restore them when they have recovered their temper."

LXXII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

AFTER I had written to you, we renewed our conversation on the same subject. I enquired of Pericles whether he thought the appellation of *golden*²⁴ was applied to Venus for her precious gifts, or for some other reason. His answer was :

" Small statues of Venus are more numerous than of any other deity : and the first that were gilt in Greece, I believe, were hers. She is worshipped, you know, not only as the Goddess of beauty, but likewise as the Goddess of fortune. In the former capacity we are her rapturous adorers for five years perhaps ; in the latter we persevere for life. Many carry her image with them on their journeys, and there is scarcely a house in any part of Greece wherein it is not a principal ornament."

I remarked to him that Apollo, from the colour of his hair and the radiance of his countenance, would be more appropriately represented in gold, and yet that the poets were unmindful to call him *golden*.²⁵

" They never found him so," said he ; " but Venus often smiles upon them in one department. Little images of her are often of solid gold, and are placed on the breast or under the pillow. Other deities are seldom of such diminutive size, or such precious materials. It is only of late that they have even borne the semblance of them. The Egyptians, the inventors of all durable colours, and indeed of everything else that is durable in the arts, devised the means of investing other metals with dissolved gold ; the Phœnicians, barbarous and indifferent to elegance and refinement, could only cover them with lamular incrustations. By improving the inventions of Egypt, bronze, odious in its own proper colour for the human

[²⁴ *e.g.*, " What life is there, what joy, without golden Aphrodite ? " — *Mimnermus*, i. 1.]

[²⁵ First ed. : " the golden."]

figure, and more odious for Divinities, assumes a splendour and majesty which almost compensate for marble itself."

"Metal," said I, "has the advantage in durability."

"Surely not," answered he; "and it is more exposed to invasion and avarice. But either of them, under cover, may endure many thousand years, I apprehend, and without corrosion. The temples of Egypt, which have remained two thousand, are fresh at this hour as when they were first erected: and all the violence of Cambyses²⁶ and his army, bent on effacing the images, have done little more harm, if you look at them from a short distance, than a single fly would do in a summer day, on a statue of Pentelican marble. The Egyptians have laboured more to commemorate the weaknesses of man than the Grecians to attest his energies. This however must be conceded to the Egyptians; that they are the only people on earth to whom destruction has not been the first love and principal occupation. The works of their hands will outlive the works of their intellect: here at least I glory in the sure hope that we shall differ from them. Judgment and perception of the true and beautiful will never allow our statuaries to represent the human countenance as they have done, in granite, and porphyry, and basalt. Their statues have resisted Time and War; ours will vanquish Envy and Malice.

"Sculpture has made great advances in my time; Painting still greater; for until the last forty years it was inelegant and rude. Sculpture can go no farther; Painting can: she may add scenery and climate to her forms. She may give to Philoctetes, not only the wing of the sea-bird, wherewith he cools the throbbing of his wound; not only the bow and the quiver at his feet, but likewise the gloomy rocks, the Vulcanian vaults, and the distant fires of Lemnos, the fierce inhabitants subdued by pity, the remorseless betrayer, and the various emotions of his retiring friends. Her reign is boundless, but the fairer and the richer part of her dominions lies within the *Odyssea*. Painting by degrees will perceive her advantages over Sculpture; but if there are paces between Sculpture and

[²⁶ Cambyses is said to have attempted to destroy the colossal statue of Memnon in Egypt.]

Painting, there are parasangs between Painting and Poetry. The difference is that of a lake confined by mountains, and a river running on through all the varieties of scenery, perpetual and unimpeded. Sculpture and Painting are moments of life ; Poetry is life itself, and every thing around it and above it.

“ But let us turn back again to the position we set out from, and offer due reverence to the truest diviners of the Gods. Phidias in ten days is capable of producing what would outlive ten thousand years, if man were not resolved to be the subverter of man’s glory. The Gods themselves will vanish away before their images.”

O Cleone ! this is painful to hear. I wish Pericles, and I too, were somewhat more religious : it is so sweet and graceful.

LXXXIII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

SHE, O Aspasia, who wishes to be more religious, hath much religion, although the volatility of her imagination and the velocity of her pursuits do not permit her to settle fixedly on the object of it. How could I have ever loved you so, if I believed the Gods would disapprove of my attachment, as they certainly would if you under-rated their power and goodness ! They take especial care both to punish the unbeliever, and to strike with awe the witnesses of unbelief. I accompanied my father, not long since, to the temple of Apollo, and when we had performed the usual rites of our devotion, there came up to us a young man of somewhat pleasing aspect, with whose family ours was anciently on terms of intimacy. After my father had made the customary inquiries, he conversed with us about his travels. He had just left Ephesus, and said he had spent the morning in a comparison between Diana’s temple and Apollo’s. He told us that they are similar in design ; but that the Ephesian ²⁷ Goddess is an ugly lump of dark-

[²⁷ Now the Ionian land has a most happy mingling of seasons, and you can find there temples such as there are nowhere else. For magnitude and wealth that of Diana at Ephesus takes the first place, and next come two unfinished temples of Apollo, one in the Branchidæ at Miletus, and the other at Clarus, in the territory of Colophon.—*Pausanias*, vii. 5. 4.]

coloured stone ; while our Apollo is of such transcendent beauty that, on first beholding him, he wondered any other God had a worshipper. My father was transported with joy at such a declaration.

“ Give up the others,” said he ; “ worship here, and rely on prosperity.”

“ Were I myself to select,” answered he, “ any deity in preference to the rest, it should not be an irascible, or vindictive, or unjust one.”

“ Surely not,” cried my father . . . “ it should be Apollo ; and *our* Apollo ! What has Diana done for any man, or any woman ? I speak submissively . . . with all reverence . . . I do not question.”

The young man answered, “ I will forbear to say a word about Diana, having been educated in great fear of her : but surely the treatment of Marsyas by Apollo was bordering on severity.”

“ Not a whit,” cried my father, “ if understood rightly.”

“ His assent to the request of Phaëton,” continued the young man, “ knowing (as he did) the consequences, seems a little deficient in that foresight which belongs peculiarly to the God of prophecy.”

My father left me abruptly, ran to the font, and sprinkled first himself, then me, lastly the guest, with lustral water.

“ We mortals,” continued he gravely, “ should not presume to argue on the Gods after our own inferior nature and limited capacities. What appears to have been cruel might have been most kindly provident.”

“ The reasoning is conclusive,” said the youth ; “ you have caught by the hand a benighted and wandering dreamer, and led him from the brink of a precipice. I see nothing left now on the road-side but the skin of Marsyas, and it would be folly to start or flinch at it.”

My father had a slight suspicion of his sincerity, and did not invite him to the house. He has attempted to come, more than once, evidently with an earnest desire to explore the truth. Several days together he has been seen on the very spot where he made the confession to my father, in deep thought, and, as we hope, under the influence of the Deity.

I forgot to tell you that this young person is Thraseas, son of Phormio the Coan.

LXXIV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

If ever there was a youth whose devotion was ardent, and whose face (I venture to say, although I never saw it) was prefigured for the offices of adoration, I suspect it must be Thraseas, son of Phormio the Coan.

Happy the man who, when every thought else is dismissed, comes last and alone into the warm and secret foldings of a letter !

LXXV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

ALCIBIADES entered the library one day when I was writing out some verses. He discovered what I was about, by my hurry in attempting to conceal them.

“ Alcibiades ! ” said I, “ we do not like to be detected in anything so wicked as poetry. Some day or other I shall perhaps have my revenge, and catch you committing the same sin with more pertinacity.”

“ Do you fancy,” said he, “ that I cannot write a verse or two, if I set my heart upon it ? ”

“ No,” replied I ; “ but I doubt whether your heart, in its lightness and volubility, would not roll off so slippery a plinth. We remember your poetical talents, displayed in all their brightness on poor Socrates.”

“ Do not laugh at Socrates,” said he. “ The man is by no means such a quibbler and impostor as some of his disciples²⁸ would represent him, making him drag along no easy mule-load, by Hercules ! no summer robe, no every-day vesture, no nurse of an after-dinner nap, but a trailing, troublesome, intricate piece of sophistry, interwoven with flowers and sphynxes, stolen from an Egyptian temple, with dust enough

[²⁸ With this attack on Plato, compare the Imaginary Conversation between Diogenes and Plato. Landor was no believer in Plato.]

in it to blind all the crocodiles as far as to the cataracts, and to dry up the Nile at its highest overflow. He is rather fond of strangling an unwary interloper with a string of questions, of which it is difficult to see the length or the knots, until the two ends are about the throat: but he lets him off easily when he has fairly set his mark on him. Anaxagoras tells me that there is not a school in Athens where the scholars are so jealous and malicious, while he himself is totally exempt from those worst and most unphilosophical of passions; that the parasitical weed grew up together with their very root, and soon overtopped the plant, but that it only hangs to his railing. Now Anaxagoras envies nobody, and only perplexes us by the admiration of his generosity, modesty, and wisdom.

“I did not come hither to disturb you, Aspasia! and will retire when I have given you satisfaction, or *revenge*; this, I think, is the word. Not only have I written verses, and, as you may well suppose, long after those upon the son of Sophroniscus, but verses upon love.”

“Are we none of us in the secret?” said I.

“You shall be,” said he; “attend and pity.”

I must have turned pale, I think, for I shuddered. He repeated these, and relieved me.

I love to look on lovely eyes,
And do not shun the sound of sighs,
If they are level with the ear;
But if they rise just o'er my chin,
O Venus! how I hate their din!
My own I am too weak to bear.

LXXVI.²⁹

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Do you remember little Artemidora, the mild and bashful girl, whom you compared to a white blossom on the river, surrounded by innumerable slender reeds, and seen only at intervals as they waved about her, making way to the breeze, and quivering and bending? Not having seen her for some time, and meeting Deiphobos who is intimate with her family, I

[²⁹ Not in 1st ed.]

ventured to ask whether he had been lately at the house. He turned pale. Imprudent and indelicate as I am, I accused him instantly, with much gaiety, of love for her. Accused! O Aspasia, how glorious is it in one to feel more sensibly than all others the beauty that lies far beyond what they ever can discern! From their earthly station they behold the sun's bright disk: he enters the palace of the God. Externally there is fire only: pure inextinguishable æther fills the whole space within, and increases the beauty it displays.

“Cleone!” said he, “you are distressed at the apprehension of having pained me. Believe me, you have not touched the part where pain lies. Were it possible that a creature so perfect could love me, I would reprove her indiscretion; I would recall to her attention what surely her eyes might indicate at a glance, the disparity of our ages; and I would teach her, what is better taught by friendship than by experience, that youth alone is the fair price of youth. However, since there is on either side nothing but pure amity, there is no necessity for any such discourse. My soul could hardly be more troubled if there were. Her health is declining while her beauty is scarcely yet at its meridian. I will not delay you, O Cleone! nor will you delay me. Rarely do I enter the temples; but I must enter here before I sleep. Artemis and Amphrodite may perhaps hear me; but I entreat you, do you also, who are more pious than I am, pray and implore of their divine goodness, that my few years may be added to hers; the few to the many, the sorrowful (not then so) to the joyous.”

He clasped my hand: I withdrew it, for it burnt me. Inconsiderate and indelicate before, call me now (what you must ever think me) barbarous and inhuman.

LXXVII.³⁰

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

THE largest heart, O Cleone, is that which only one can rest upon or impress; the purest is that which dares to call itself impure; the kindest is that which shrinks rather at its own

[³⁰ Not in 1st ed.]

inhumanity than at another's. Cleone barbarous ! Cleone inhuman ! Silly girl ! you are fit only to be instructress to the sillier Aspasia. In some things (in this for instance) I am wiser than you. I have truly a great mind to make you blush again, and so make you accuse yourself a second time of indiscretion. After a pause, I am resolved on it. Now then. Artemidora is the very girl who preferred you to me both for manners and beauty. Many have done the same no doubt, but she alone to my face. When we were sitting, one evening in autumn, with our feet in the Maeander, her nurse conducted her towards us. We invited her to sit down between us, which at first she was afraid of doing, because the herbage had recovered from the drought of summer and had become succulent as in spring, so that it might stain her short white dress. But when we showed her how this danger might be avoided, she blushed, and, after some hesitation was seated. Before long, I enquired of her who was her little friend, and whether he was handsome, and whether he was sensible, and whether he was courageous, and whether he was ardent. She answered all these questions in the affirmative, excepting the last, which she really did not understand. At length came the twilight of thought that showed her blushes. I ceased to persecute her, and only asked her which of us she liked the best and thought the most beautiful. "I like Cleone the best," said she, "and think her the most beautiful, because she took my hand and pitied my confusion when such very strange questions were put to me." However, she kissed me when she saw I was concerned at my impropriety : maybe a part of the kiss was given as a compensation for the severity of her sentence.

LXXVIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

We are but pebbles in a gravel walk,
Some blacker and some whiter, pebbles still,
Fit only to be trodden on.

THESE words were introduced into a comedy, lately written by Polus, a remarkably fat person and who appears to have

enjoyed life and liberty as much as any citizen in Athens. I happen to have rendered some services to Philonides,³¹ the actor, to whom the speech is addressed. He brought me the piece before its representation, telling me that Polus and his friends had resolved to applaud the passage, and to turn their faces toward Pericles. I made him a little present, on condition that, in the representation, he should repeat the following verses in reply, instead of the poet's.

Fair Polus !
Can such fierce winds blow over such smooth seas !
I never saw a pebble in my life
So richly set as thou art : now, by Jove,
He who would tread upon thee can be none
Except the proudest of the elephants,
The tallest and the surest-footed beast
In all the stables of the kings of Ind.

The comedy was interrupted by roars of laughter: the friends of Polus slunk away, and he himself made many a violent effort to do the same; but Amphicydes, who stood next, threw his arms round his neck, crying,

“Behold another Codrus! devoting himself for his country. The infernal Powers require no black bull for sacrifice; they are quite satisfied. Eternal peace with Boeotia! eternal praise to her! what a present! where was he fatted?”

We had invited Polus to dine with us, and now condoled with him on his loss of appetite. The people of Athens were quite out of favour with him.

“I told them what they were fit for,” cried he, “and they proved it. Amphicydes . . . I do not say he has been at Sparta . . . I myself saw him, no long time ago, on the road that leads to Megara . . . that city rebelled soon after. His wife died strangely: she had not been married two years, and had grown ugly and thin: he might have used her for a broom if she had hair enough . . . perhaps he did; odd noises have been heard in the house. I have no suspicion or spite against any man living . . . and, praise to the Gods! I can live without being an informer.”

[³¹ Philonides was a friend of Aristophanes, under whose name the latter brought out some of his earlier plays. He was probably not an actor, but a dramatic poet. Polus is an imaginary character.]

We listened with deep interest, but could not understand the allusion, as he perceived by our looks.

“ You will hear to-morrow,” said he, “ how unworthily I have been treated. Wit draws down Folly on ⁸² us, and she must have her fling. It does not hit ; it does not hit.”

Slaves brought in a ewer of water, with several napkins. They were not lost upon Polus, and he declared that those two boys had more sagacity and intuition than all the people in the theatre.

“ In your house and your administration, O Pericles, every thing is timed well and done well, without our knowing how. Dust will rise,” said he, “ dust will rise ; if we would not raise it we must never stir. They have begun with those who would reform their manners ; they will presently carry their violence against those who maintain and execute the laws.”

Supper was served.

“ A quail, O best Polus ! ” *

“ A quail, O wonderful ! may hurt me ; but being recommended . . . ”

It disappeared.

“ The breast of that capon . . . ”

“ Capons, being melancholic, breed melancholy within.”

“ Coriander-seed might correct it, together with a few of those white plump pine-seeds.”

“ The very disaderation ! ”

It was corrected.

[⁸² First ed. : “ upon.”]

* O best ! O wonderful ! O lady ! ⁸³ &c. Ω βελτιστε : Ω θαυμαστε : Ω δεσποινα. Conversation was never carried on without these terms, even among Philosophers, as we see in Plato, &c.

[⁸³ In the 1st ed. this note continues : “ The editor has thought it his duty to be quite literal in translating, Ω βελτιστε : Ω θαυμαστε : Ω δεσποινα, &c. Conversation was never carried on without them, even among philosophers, as we see in Plato, &c. An apology ought to be offered for not adorning the text with the Greek, it being the fashion to enrich the toilet with antiquities. Poverty must plead for the editor ; when he published the *Letters of Cleopatra*, he promises his fair friends that he will be more liberal of the Coptic ; the original Greek being lost, and the Coptic being the only known version.”]

"Tunny under oil, with marjoram and figs, pickled locusts, and pistachioes. Your ⁸⁴ stomach seems delicate."

"Alas! indeed it is declining. Tunny! tunny! I dare not, O festoon of the Graces! I dare not verily. Chian wine alone can appease its seditions."

They were appeased.

Some livers were offered him, whether of fish or fowl, I know not, for I can hardly bear to look at that dish. He waved them away, but turned suddenly round, and said, "Youth! I think I smell fennel."

"There is fennel, O mighty one!" replied the slave, "and not fennel only, but parsley and honey, pepper and rosemary, garlic from Salamis, and . . ."

"Say no more, say no more; fennel is enough for moderate men, and brave ones. It reminds me of the field of Marathon."⁸⁵

The field was won; nothing was left upon it.

Another slave came forward, announcing loudly and pompously, "Gosling from Brauron! Sauce, prunes, mustard-seed, capers, fenu-greek, sesamum, and squills."

"Squills!" exclaimed Polus, "they soothe the chest. It is not every cook that is deep in the secrets of nature. Brauron! an ancient city; I have friends in Brauron; I will taste, were it only for remembrance of them."

He made several essays, several pauses.

"But when shall we come to the squills?" said he, turning to the slave; "the qualities of the others are negative."

The whole dish was presently.

"Our pastry," said I, "O illustrious Polus! is the only thing I can venture to recommend at table; the other dishes are merely on sufferance; but, really, our pastry is good; I usually dine entirely upon it."

"Entirely!" cried he, in amaze.

"With a glass of water," added I, "and some grapes, fresh or dry."

"To accompany you, O divine Aspasia! though in good truth this said pastry is but a sandy sort of road; no great way can be made in it."

[⁸⁴ First ed.: "for your."]

[⁸⁵ "Marathon" in Greek means Fennel.]

The diffident Polus was not a bad engineer however, and he soon had an opportunity of admiring the workmanship at the bottom of the salver.

Two dishes of roast meat were carried to him. I know not what one was, nor could Polus easily make up his mind upon it; experiment following experiment. Kid however was an old acquaintance.

“Those who kill kids,” said he, “deserve well of their country, for they grow up mischievous: the Gods, aware of this, make them very eatable. They require some management, some skill, some reflection; mint, shalot, dandelion, vinegar: strong coercion upon ‘em. Chian wine, boy!”

“What does Pericles eat?”

“Do not mind Pericles. He has eaten of the quails, and some roast fish, besprinkled with bay-leaves³⁶ for sauce.”

“Fish! ay, that makes him so vigilant. Cats . . .”

Here he stopt, not, however, without a diversion in his favour from me, observing that he usually dined on vegetables, fish, and some bird: that his earlier meal was his longest, confectionary, honey, and white bread, composing it.”

“And³⁷ Chian or Lesbian?”

“He enjoys a little wine after dinner, preferring the lighter and subacid.”

“Wonderful man!” cried he; “and all from such fare as that!”

When he rose from table he seemed by his countenance to be quiet again at heart; nevertheless he said in my ear, with a sigh, “Did I possess the power of Pericles, or the persuasion of Aspasia, by the Immortals! I would enrich the galleys with a grand dotation. Every soul of them would I —yes, every soul of them—monsters of ingratitude, hypocrites, traitors, they should for Egypt, for Carthage, Mauritania, Numidia. He will find out before long what dogs he has been skimming the kettle for.”

It required an effort to be perfectly composed, at a simile which I imagine has never been used in the Greek language since the days of Medea; but I cast down my eyes, and said

[³⁶ First ed.: “dried bay leaves.”]

[³⁷ *ot in 1st ed.*]

consolatorily, "It is difficult to do justice to such men as Pericles and Polus."

He would now have let me into the secret, but others saved me.³⁸

Our farmers, in the number of their superstitions, entertain a firm belief that any soil is rendered more fertile by burying an ass's head in it. On this idea is founded the epigram I send to you: It raised a laugh at dinner.

Leave me thy head when thou art dead,
Speusippus! prudent farmers say
An ass's skull makes plentiful
The poorest soil; and ours is clay.

LXXXIX.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

ANAXAGORAS is the true, firm, constant friend of Pericles: the golden lamp that shines perpetually on the image I adore. Yet sometimes he speaks severely. On one of these occasions, Pericles took him by the hand, saying,

"O Anaxagoras! sincere and ardent lover of Truth! why do not you love her in such a manner as never to let her see you out of humour?"

"Because," said Anaxagoras, "you divide my affections with her, much to my shame."

Pericles was called away on business; I then said,

"O Anaxagoras! is not Pericles a truly great man?"

He answered, "If Pericles were a truly great man, he would not wish to appear different from what he is; he would know himself, and make others know him; he seems to guard against both. Much is wanting to constitute his greatness. He possesses, it is true, more comprehensiveness and concentration than any living; perhaps more than any since Solon; but he thinks that power over others is better than power over himself; as if a mob were worth a man, and an acclamation were worth a Pericles."

"But," said I, "he has absolute command over himself;

[³⁸ In 1st ed. this letter ends here.]

and it is chiefly by exerting it that he has obtained an ascendancy over the minds of others."

"Has he rendered them wiser and more virtuous?" said he.

"You know best," replied I, "having lived much longer among them."

"Perhaps," said Anaxagoras, "I may wrong him; perhaps he has saved them from worse disasters."

"You think him then ambitious!" said I, with some sadness.

"Ambitious!" cried he, "how so? He might have been a philosopher, and he is content to be a ruler."

I was ill at ease.

"Come," said I, "Anaxagoras! come into the garden with me. It is rather too warm indeed out of doors, but we have many evergreens, high and shady, and those who, like you and me, never drink wine, have little to dread from the heat."

Whether the ilexes and bays and oleanders struck his imagination, and presented the simile I cannot tell, but he thus continued in illustration of his discourse.

"There are no indeciduous plants, Aspasia! the greater part lose their leaves in winter, the rest in summer. It is thus with men. The generality yield and are stript under the first chilly blasts that shake them. They who have weathered these, drop leaf after leaf in the sunshine. The virtues by which they arose to popularity, take another garb, another aspect, another form, and totally disappear. Be not uneasy; the heart of Pericles will never dry up, so many streams run into it."

He retired to his studies; I spoke but little that evening, and slept late.

LXXX.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

How can I ever hope to shew you, in all its brightness, the character of my friend? I will tell you how; by following Love and Truth. Like most others who have no genius, I do not feel the want of it, at least not here.

A shallow water may reflect the sun as perfectly as a deeper.

The words of Anaxagoras stuck to me like thistles. I resolved to speak in playfulness with the object of our conversation. First I began to hint at enemies. He smiled.

“The children in my orchard,” said he, “are not yet grown tall enough to reach the fruit; they may throw at it, but can bring none down.”

“Do tell me, O Pericles!” said I, “now we are inseparable for ever, how many struggles with yourself (to say nothing of others) you must have had, before you attained the position you have taken.”

“It is pleasanter,” answered he, “to think of our glory than of the means by which we acquired it.”

“When we see the horses that have won at the Olympian games, do we ask what oats they have eaten to give them such velocity and strength? Do those who swim admirably ever trouble their minds about the bladders they swam upon in learning, or inquire what beasts supplied them? When the winds are filling our sails, do we lower them and delay our voyage, in order to philosophise on the particles of air composing them, or to speculate what region produced them, or what becomes of them afterward?”

LXXXI.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

At last, Aspasia, you love indeed. The perfections of your beloved interest you less than the imperfections, which you no sooner take up for reprehension, than you admire, embrace, and defend. Happy, happy, Aspasia! but are you wise, and good, and equable, and fond of sincerity, as formerly? Nay, do not answer me. The Gods forbid that I should force you to be ingenious, and love you for it. How much must you have lost before you are praised for that!

Archelaus, of all our philosophers the most quiet man, and the most patient investigator, will bring you this. He desires to be the hearer of Anaxagoras.

LXXXII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I RECEIVED our countryman with great pleasure. He was obliged to be *my* hearer for several hours: I hope his patience will never be so much tried by Anaxagoras. I placed them together at table; but Anaxagoras would not break through his custom; nothing of philosophy. Our repast would have been even less talkative than usual, had not Anaxagoras asked our guest whether the earlier Milesian authors, poets or historians, had mentioned Homer.

“I find not a word about him in any one of them,” replied he, “although we have the works of Cadmus and Phocylides, the former an admirable historian, the latter an indifferent poet, but not the less likely to mention him, and they are supposed to have lived within three centuries of his age. Permit my first question to you, in my search after truth, to be this; whether his age were not much earlier?”

“This is not the only question,” said Anaxagoras, “on which you will hear from me the confession of my utter ignorance. I am interested in everything that relates to the operations of the human mind; and Pericles has in his possession every author whose works have been transcribed. The number will appear quite incredible to you; there cannot be fewer than two hundred. I find poetry to which is attributed an earlier date than to Homer’s; but stupidity and barbarism are no convincing proofs. I find Cretan, Ionian, Laconian, and Boeotian, written certainly more than three centuries ago; the language is not copious, is not fluent, is not refined. Pericles says it is all of it inharmonious: of this I cannot judge, he can. Dropides and Mimmernus wrote no better verses than the servant girls sing upon our staircases. Archilochus and Alcman, who lived a century earlier, composed much grander; but where there is at once ferocity and immodesty, either the age must have been barbarous, or the poet must have been left behind it. Sappho was in reality the reviver of poetry, teaching it to humanize and delight; Simonides brought it to perfection. The muse of Lesbos, as she is called, and Alcaeus, invented each a novel species of

strophe. Aspasia prefers the poetry of Sappho, and the metre of Alcæus,³⁹ which however, I think she informs us, is less adapted to her subjects than her own is."

"It appears to me," said I, "that everyone who felt strong in poetry was ambitious of being an inventor in its measures. Archilochus, the last of any note, invented the iambic."

"True, O Aspasia!" said Pericles, "but not exactly in the sense usually received. He did not invent, as many suppose, the senarian iambic, which is coeval almost with the language itself, and many of which creep into the closest prose compositions, but he was the first who subjoined a shorter to it, the barb to the dart, so fatal to Cleobule and Lycambes."⁴⁰

"His first," said I, "is like the trot of a mastif, his second is like the spring at the throat.

"Homer alone has enriched the language with sentences full of harmony. How long his verse was created, how long his Gods had lived before *him*, how long he himself before *us*, is yet uncertain, although Herodotus* is of opinion that he is nearer to us than Pericles and Anaxagoras admit. But these two philosophers place sun, moon, and stars, beyond all reasonable limits; I know not how far off."

"We none of us know," said Pericles; "but Anaxagoras hopes that, in a future age, human knowledge will be more extensive and more correct; and Meton has encouraged us in our speculations. The heavenly bodies may keep their secrets two or three thousand years yet,⁴¹ but one or other will betray

[³⁹ "Whose titian angels Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starred from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries
Tower, as the deep domed empyrean
Rings to the roar of an angel onset."—*Tennyson.*]

[⁴⁰ Lycambes was the father of Neobule, who at first accepted Archilochus as a suitor for her hand and then rejected him. Both she and her father were so stung by the libels that he afterwards published against them that they hanged themselves.]

* The life of Homer appended to the works of Herodotus is spurious.

[⁴¹ First ed.: "more."]

them to some wakeful favourite, some Endymion⁴² beyond Latmos, perhaps in regions undiscovered, certainly in uncalculated times. Men will know more of them than they will ever know of Homer. Our knowledge on this miracle of our species is unlikely to increase."

LXXXIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

PERICLES, who is acknowledged to have a finer ear than any of our poets or rhetoricians, is of opinion that the versification in all the books, of both *Iliad* and *Odyssea*, was modulated by the same master key. Sophocles too, certainly less jolted than you would suppose, by the deep ruts, angular turns, and incessant jerks of the iambic, tells me that he finds no other heroic verses at all resembling it in the rhythm, and that, to his apprehension, it is not dissimilar in the two poems.

But I must continue, while I remember them perfectly, the words of Pericles.

"The *Ulysses* of the *Iliad* and *Odyssea* is not the same, but the Homer is. Might not the poet have collected, in his earlier voyages, many wonderful tales about the chieftain of Ithaca; about his wanderings and return; about his wife and her suitors? Might not afterward the son or grandson have solicited his guest and friend to place the sagacious, the courageous, the enduring man, among the others whom he was celebrating in detached poems, as leaders against Troy? He describes with precision everything in Ithaca: it is evident he must have been upon the spot. Of all other countries, of Sicily, of Italy, of Phrygia, he quite as evidently writes from tradition and representation. Phrygia was subject to the Assyrian kings at the time when he commences his siege. The Greeks, according to him, had been ravaging the country many years, and had swept away many cities. What were the

[⁴² "But Endymion, if we care to listen to legends, fell asleep once upon a time on Latmos, a mountain in Caria. Nor, I think, is he yet awake again, and what cares he though the Moon eclipse herself to kiss him as he lies asleep there having lulled him to slumber to that end."—*Cicero, Tusc. Disp.* i. 38.]

Assyrian kings doing? Did the Grecians lose no men by war, by climate, by disease, by time, in the whole ten years? Their horses must have been strong and long-lived; an excellent breed! to keep their teeth and mettle for five-and-twenty. I should have imagined that some of them must have got lamed, some few perhaps foundered; surely here and there a chariot can have had but one remaining, and he, in all probability, not in the very best condition. I cannot but think that Homer took from Sesostris the shield that he has given to Achilles. The Greeks never worked gold so skilfully as in this shield, until our own Phidias taught them; and even he possesses not the art of giving all the various colours to the metal which are represented as designating the fruitage, and other things included in this stupendous work, and which the Egyptians in his time, and long earlier, understood.⁴³ How happened it that the Trojans had Greek names, and the leader of the Greeks an Egyptian one? When I was at Byzantium,⁴⁴ I had the curiosity to visit the imaginary scene of their battles, I saw many sepulchral monuments, of the most durable kind, conical elevations of earth, on which there were sheep and goats at pasture. There were ruins beyond, but neither of a great city nor of an ancient one. The only ancient walls I saw were on the European coast; those of Byzantium, which Aspasia claims as the structure of Miletus, and which the people of Megara tell us were founded by their forefathers, less than two centuries ago. But neither Miletus nor Megara was built when these walls were entire. They belong to the unknown world, and are sometimes called Pelasgian, sometimes Cyclopean; appellations without meaning; signs that signify nothing; inscriptions that point out the road to places where there is neither place nor road. Walls of this massive struc-

[⁴³ The passage "I . . . understood" is not in the 1st ed.]

[⁴⁴ "Now the walls of Byzantium are exceeding strong. For the facing of them is built with thick four-sided square stones, bound together with brazen clamps, and the interior of the walls is strengthened with earth works and other fortifications, so that the whole seems to be one thick wall, and on the top the wall is so made that men can go upon it and is well fortified. And there are many towers of great size jutting out from the wall, with loop-holes round each of them."

—Dion Cassius, lxxiv. 10.]

ture surround the ruins of Phocæa,⁴⁵ destroyed by Cyrus; they are also found in Tyrrhenia. Our acropolis was surmounted by such, until the administration of Themistocles, who removed the stones to serve as foundations to the works in the harbour; the occasion being urgent, and the magnitude of the blocks being admirably proper for that solid structure."

Cleone! are you tired? rest then.

LXXXIV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

SEVERAL times had Pericles been silent, expecting and inviting our guests to assist him in the investigation.

"I have no paradox to maintain, no partiality to defend," said he. "Some tell us that there were twenty Homers, some deny that there was ever one. It were idle and foolish to shake the contents of a vase in order to let them settle at last. We are perpetually laboring to destroy our delight, our composure, our devotion to superior power. Of all the animals upon earth we least know what is good for us. My opinion is, that what is best for us is our admiration of good. No man living venerates Homer more than I do. He was the only author I read when I was a boy, for our teachers are usually of opinion that wisdom and poetry are like fruit for children, unwholesome if too fresh. Simonides had indeed grown somewhat sound; Pindar was heating; Æschylus . . . ay, but Æschylus was almost at the next door. Homer then nourished my fancy, animated my dreams, awoke me in the morning, marched with me, sailed with me, taught me morals, taught me language, taught me music, and philosophy, and war.

[⁴⁵ "The Phœnician King of Tarlessus in Spain regarded the Phocæans with so much favour as at first to beg them to quit Ionia and settle in whatever part of his country they liked. Afterwards finding that he could not prevail upon them to agree to this, and hearing that the Mede was growing great in their neighbourhood, he gave them money to build a wall about their town, and certainly he must have given it with a bountiful hand, for the town is many furlongs in circuit, and the wall is built entirely of great blocks of stone skilfully fitted together."—Rawlinson's *Herodotus*.]

“Ah, were he present at this hour among us! that I might ask him how his deities entered Troy. In Phrygia there was but one Goddess, the mother of all the Gods, Cybele. Unlike our mortal mothers, she was displeased if you noticed her children; indeed, she disowned them. Her dignity, her gravity,⁴⁶ her high antiquity, induced the natives of the islands, and afterward the other Greeks, to place their little Gods under her protection, and to call her their mother. Jupiter had his Ida, but not the Phrygian; and Pallas was worshipped in her citadels, but not above the streams of Simois and Scamander. Our holy religion has not yet found its way far beyond us; like the myrtle and olive, it loves the sea-air, and flourishes but upon few mountains in the interior. The Cabiri⁴⁷ still hold Samothrace; and we may almost hear the cries of human victims in the north.

“If there were any true history of the times we are exploring, perhaps we might find in it that many excursions, combined and simultaneous, had utterly failed; and that the disasters of many chiefs engaged in them were partly concealed from the nations they governed by the sacred veil of poetry. Of those who are reputed to have sailed against Troy, none returned prosperous, none with the men he had led out; most were forbidden to land again upon their native shores, and some who attempted it were slain. Such is usually the fate of the unsuccessful. It is more probable that the second great naval expedition of the Greeks went out to avenge the disasters of the first, the Argonautic; and the result was nearly the same. Of the Argonauts few returned. Sparta lost her Castor and Pollux; Thessaly her Jason; and I am more disposed to believe that the head of Orpheus rolled down the Phasis than down the Hebrus.

“The poets gave successes which the Gods denied. But these things concern us little; the poet is what we seek. Needless is it to remark that the Iliad is a work of much

[⁴⁶ First ed.: “consequence.”]

[⁴⁷ The meaning and origin of the sacred rites celebrated to the Cabiri, or instituted by them in Samothrace or elsewhere, were unknown to the ancients themselves. Human sacrifices were unknown in Athens almost up to the time of Pericles, if the story of the sacrifice performed before the Persian war be correct.]

reflection and various knowledge ; the *Odyssea* is the marvellous result of a vivid and wild imagination. Aspasia prefers it. Homer, in nearly the thirty years which I conceive to have intervened between the fanciful work and the graver, had totally lost his pleasures. Polyphemus could amuse him no longer ; Circe lighted up in vain her fires of cedar-wood ; Calypso had lost her charms ; her maidens were mute around her ; the Lestrigons lay asleep ; the Syrens sang,

“ Come hither, O passer by ! come hither,
O glory of the Achaians,

and the smooth waves quivered with the sound, but the harp of the old man had no chord that vibrated.

“ In the *Odyssea* he invokes the Muse ; in the *Iliad* he invokes her as a Goddess he had invoked before. He begins the *Odyssea* as the tale of a family, to which he would listen as she rehearsed it ; the *Iliad* is a song of warriors and divinities, worthy of the Goddess herself to sing before the world.

“ Demonstrate that metaphors are discoverable, drawn from things believed to have been uninvented in the Homeric age ; what does it prove ? merely that Homer, who lived among the islands, and among those who had travelled into all the known regions of the world, had collected more knowledge than the shepherds and boar-hunters on the continent.

“ Demonstrate that some books in the compilation retain slight traces of a language not exactly the same as the others. What then ? Might they not have been composed while he visited countries in which that dialect was indigenous ? or might they not have been found there at the first collection of the songs, having undergone some modification from the singers, adapted to the usages and phraseology of the people ?

“ Who doubts that what was illegible or obscure in the time of Lycurgus,⁴⁸ was rendered clearer by the learned Spartan ?

[⁴⁸ “ There (in Asia) also he (Lycurgus) probably met with Homer’s poems which were preserved by the posterity of Cleophylus. Observing that many moral sentences and much political knowledge were intermixed with his stories, which had an irresistible charm, he collected them into one body and transcribed them with pleasure, in order to take them home with him. For his glorious poetry was not yet fully known in Greece.”—*Langhorne’s Plutarch, Lycurgus*. The allusion to Crete is the result of a misunderstanding of the passage.]

That some Cretan words, not the Dorian of Sparta, had crept in ; that others were substituted ; that Solon,⁴⁹ Pisistratus, and Hipparchus, had also to correct a few of these corrections, and many things more ? They found a series of songs ; never was there a series of such length without an oversight or gap.

“ Shall the *salpinx* be sounded in my ear ? Homer may have introduced it by way of allusion in one poem, not wanting it in the other. The Grecians of his time never used it in battle ; eastern nations did ; and perhaps had he known the Phrygians better, its blasts would have sounded on the plains of Troy. He would have discovered that trumpets had been used among them for many ages. We possess no knowledge of any nation who cultivated the science of music so early, or employed so great a variety of wind instruments, unless it be the Sidonian. Little did he know of Phrygia, and as little do we know of him. His beautiful creation lies displayed before us ; the creator is hidden in his own splendour. I can more easily believe that his hand constructed the whole, than that twenty men could be found, at nearly the same time, each of genius sufficient for the twentieth part ; because in many centuries there arose not a single one capable of such a production as that portion.

“ Archilochus and Simonides are excellent only in their shorter poems ; they could not have whistled so well throughout a long march. Difficulties are to be overcome on both sides. We have no grammarians worthy of the appellation ; none in any district of Greece hath studied the origin and etymology of his language. We sing like the birds, equally ignorant whence our voice arises. What is worse, we are fonder of theories than of truth, and believe that we have not room enough to build up anything, until we subvert what we

[⁴⁹ Solon is said to have compelled the reciters of the Homeric poems to adhere to the proper order of the incidents, while to Pisistratus is supposed to be due the first critical edition of the Iliad and Odyssey. Hipparchus Plato calls “ the oldest and wisest of the sons of Pisistratus, who, among many other proofs of his wisdom, was the first to bring Homer’s works to Athens, and caused the rhapsodists to recite them at each alternate feast of the Panathenaia, as is done to this day.” — *Hipparchus.*]

find before us. Be it so ; but let it be only what is obnoxious, what opposes our reason, what disturbs our tranquillity of mind ; not what shows us the extent of the one, the potency of the other, and, consoling us for being mortal, assures us that our structures may be as durable as those of the Gods themselves. The name of Homer will be venerated as long as the holiest of theirs ; I dare not say longer ; I dare not say by wiser men. I hope I am guilty of no impiety ; I should aggravate it by lowering Homer, the loftiest of their works.”

LXXXV.¹

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

We are losing, day by day, one friend or other. Artemidora of Ephesus was betrothed to Elpenor, and their nuptials, it was believed, were at hand. How gladly would Artemidora have survived Elpenor. I pitied her almost as much as if she had. I must ever love true lovers on the eve of separation. These indeed were little known to me until a short time before. We became friends when our fates had made us relatives. On these occasions there are always many verses, but not always so true in feeling and in fact as those which I shall now transcribe for you :

“ Artemidora ! Gods invisible,
While thou art lying faint along the couch,
Have tied the sandal to thy veined feet,
And stand beside thee, ready to convey
Thy weary steps where other rivers flow.
Refreshing shades will waft thy weariness
Away, and voices like thine own come nigh
Soliciting, nor vainly, thy embrace.”
Artemidora sigh'd, and would have press'd
The hand now pressing hers, but was too weak.
Fate's² shears were over her dark hair unseen
While thus Elpenor spake : He look'd into
Eyes that had given light and life erewhile

[¹ Not in 1st ed.]

[² In the version of this poem published in the *Hellenics*, 1846, this line reads, “ Iris stood over her dark hair unseen.” Cf. *Virgil*, *Aeneid*, iv. 693, etc. In the reprint the last three lines of the poem are omitted—to my mind a noteworthy improvement.]

To those above them, those now dim with tears
 And watchfulness. Again he spake of joy
 Eternal. At that word, that sad word, joy,
 Faithful and fond her bosom heav'd once more,
 Her head fell back: one sob, one loud deep sob
 Swell'd through the darken'd chamber; 'twas not hers:
 With her that old boat incorruptible,
 Unwearied, undiverted in its course,
 Had plash'd the water up the farther strand.

LXXXVI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

ARISTOPHANES often dines with us; nevertheless he is secretly an enemy of Pericles, and, fearing to offend him personally, is satirical on most of our friends. Meton, whose character you know already, great in astronomy, great in geometry, great in architecture, was consulted by Pericles on beautifying the streets of the city, which are close and crooked. No sooner had Aristophanes heard this, than he began to compose a comedy, entitled *The Birds*.³ He has here represented our quiet contemplative Meton, with a rule and compass in his hands, uttering the most ludicrous absurdities. Meton is a plain, unassuming, inoffensive man, and never speaks inconsiderately. The character is clumsily drawn; but that fault was easily corrected, by representing poor Meton under the chastisement of the cudgel. There is so much wit in this, I doubt whether any audience can resist it. There is magic in every stroke, and what was amiss is mended and made whole again ere the hammer falls. How easy a way of setting all things to rights, with only one dissentient voice!

[³ "METON.—These are instruments;
 An atmospherical, geometrical scale.
 First you must understand that the atmosphere
 Is framed in a manner altogether partly
 In the fashion of a furnace or a funnel.
 I take this circular arc with the movable arm,
 And so by shifting it round till it coincides
 At the angle—you understand me?"

PEISTHETAIRUS.—Not in the least!
 METON.—I obtain a true division with the quadrature
 Of the equilateral circle. Here I trace
 Your market place," etc.

—Frere's *Aristophanes. The Birds*, l. 1220.]

In the same Comedy is ridiculed the project of Pericles, on a conformity of weights and measures in Attica and her dependencies. More wit! another beating!

When Aristophanes made us the next visit, Pericles, after greeting him with much good-nature, and after various conversations with him seemed suddenly to recollect something, and, with more familiarity than usual, took him gently by the elbow, led him a little aside, and said with a smile, and in a low voice,

“ My dear friend Aristophanes ! I find you are by no means willing to receive the same measure as you give ; but remember, the people have ordered the adjustment, the surest preservative against fraud, particularly that by which the poorer are mostly the sufferers. Take care they do not impeach you, knowing as you do how inefficient is my protection. It is chiefly on such an occasion I should be sorry to be in a minority.”

Aristophanes blushed and looked alarmed. Pericles took him by the hand, whispering in his ear, “ Do not let us enter into a conspiracy against Equity, by attacking the uniformity of weights and measures ; nor against Comedy, by giving the magistrates a pretext to forbid its representation.”

Aristophanes turned toward Pantarces, who stood near him, and said,

“ I can write a comedy as well as most ; Pericles can act one better than any.”

Aristophanes, in my opinion, might have easily been the first lyric poet now living, except Sophocles and Euripides ; he chose rather to be the bitterest satirist. How many, adorned with all the rarities of intellect, have stumbled on the entrance into life, and have made a wrong choice on the very thing which was to determine their course for ever ! This is among the reasons, and perhaps is the principal one, why the wise and the happy are two distinct classes of men.

LXXXVII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I HAD retired before Aristophanes went home. On my return, it was evident that some one present had inveighed

against the poet's effrontery, for I was in time to catch these words of Pericles.

" Why should I be angry with the writers of comedy? Is it because they tell me of the faults I find in myself? Surely not; for he who finds them in himself may be quite certain that others have found them in him long before, and have shown much forbearance in the delay.

" Is it because I am told of those I have not discovered in me? Foolish indeed were this. I am to be angry, it seems, because a man forewarns me that I have enemies in my chamber who will stab me when they find me asleep and because he helps me to catch them and disarm them.

" But it is such an indignity to be ridiculed! I incurred a greater when I threw myself into the way of ridicule: a greater still should I suffer if I tried whether it could be remedied by resentment."

Ridicule often parries resentment, but resentment never yet parried ridicule.

LXXXVIII.

ASPASIA TO HERODOTUS.

HERODOTUS! if there is any one who admires your writings more than another, it is I. No residence in Attica will ever make me prefer the dialect to ours; no writer will charm my ear as you have done; and yet you cannot bring me to believe that the sun⁴ is driven out of his course by storms; nor any of the consequences you deduce from it, occasioning the overflow of the Nile. The opinion you consider as unfounded, namely, that it arises from the melting of the snows, and from the periodical rains on the mountains of Ethiopia, is however that of Pericles and Anaxagoras, who attribute it also to

[⁴ " I will therefore explain what I think to be the reason of the Nile's swelling in the summer months. During the winter the sun is driven out of his usual course by the storms, and removes to the upper part of Libya. This is the whole secret in the fewest possible words, for it stands to reason that the country to which the sun-god approaches the nearest, and which he passes most directly over, will be scantest of water, and that there the streams which feed the rivers will shrink the most."—Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, ii. 22.]

Thales, in their estimation the soundest and shrewdest of philosophers. They appear to have very strange notions about the sun, about his magnitude, his position, and distance ; and I doubt whether you could persuade them that the three stoutest winds are able to move him one furlong. I am a great doubter, you see ; but they, I do assure you, are greater. Pericles is of opinion that natural philosophy has made but little progress ; and yet that many more discoveries have burst open before the strenuous inquirer than have been manifested to the world ; that some have been suppressed by a fear of the public, and some by a contempt for it.

“ In the intellectual,” said he, “ as in the physical, men grasp you firmly and tenaciously by the hand, creeping close at your side, step for step, while you lead them into darkness ; but when you conduct them into sudden light, they start and quit you.”

O Herodotus ! may your life and departure be happy ! But how can it be expected ! No other deities have ever received such honours as you have conferred upon the Muses ;⁵ and alas, how inefficient are they to reward or protect their votaries !

LXXXIX.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

THE tragedy of Phrynicus, on the devastation of our city by the Persians, will outlast all the cities now flourishing on earth.* Heavy was the mulct to which the poet was condemned by the Athenians for the tears he drew from them in the theatre.

[⁵ “ The great Olympian games were then going on, and Herodotus, deeming this to be the chance which he had much desired, and seeing a full assembly of the greatest men come together from all parts, going into the portico of the temple of Olympian Zeus, proclaimed himself not a spectator, but one who would contend in the games, and by reciting his history so charmed the bystanders that they gave to each of the nine books of his history the name of one of the nine Muses.”—*Lucian, Herodotus*, i.]

* This tragedy, which produced a more powerful effect than any other on record, has failed however to fulfil the prophecy of Cleone : the Ode of Aletheia, on which she places so small a value, has outlived it.

Is it not remarkable that we have never found any Milesian poem on the same subject? Surely there must have been several. Within how short a period have they perished! Lately, in searching the houses of such inhabitants as were suspected of partiality to the interests of Lacedæmon, these verses were discovered. They bear the signature of *Aletheia, daughter of Charidemus and Astyage.*

We have often heard her story. Often have we sat upon the mound of ruins under which she lies buried: often have we plucked from it the white cyclamen, sweetest of all sweet odours, and played with its stiff reverted little horns, pouring forth a parsimonious fragrance, won only when we applied to them tenderly and closely.

Whether poor Aletheia gave for life more than life's value, it were worse than curiosity to inquire. She loved her deliverer; and, at the instigation of many less gentle, she was slain for loving him. When the city was again in possession of the citizens, she was stoned to death for favouring the invader; and her mother rushed forward and shared it. These are things you know; her poem, her only one extant, you do not. You will find in it little of poetry, but much of what is better and rarer, true affection.

ALETHEIA TO PHRAORTES.

Phraortes! where art thou?
The flames were panting after us, their darts
Had pierced to many hearts
Before the Gods, who heard nor prayer nor vow;

Temples had sunk to earth, and other smoke
O'er riven altars broke
Than curled from myrrh and nard,
When like a God among
Arm'd host and unarm'd throng
Thee I discern'd, implored, and caught one brief regard.

Thou passest: from thy side
Sudden two bowmen ride
And hurry me away.
Thou and all hope were gone . . .
They loo'sd me . . . and alone
In a closed tent mid gory arms I lay.

How did my tears then burn
 When, dreading thy return,
 Behold thee reappear!
 Nor helm nor sword nor spear . . .

In violet gold-hem'd vest
 Thou cam'st forth . . . too soon!
 Fallen at thy feet, claspt to thy breast,
 I struggled, sob, and swoon.

“O send me to my mother! . . . bid her come,
 And take my last farewell!
 One blow! . . . enough for both . . . one tomb.
 'Tis there *our* happy dwell.”

Thou orderest: call'd and gone
 At once they are⁶ who breathe for thy command,
 Thou stoodest nigh me, soothing every moan,
 And pressing in both thine my hand,

Then, and then only, when it tore
 My hair to hide my face;
 And gently did thy own bend o'er
 The abject head war-doom'd to dire disgrace.

Ionian was thy tongue,
 And when thou badest me to raise
 That head, nor fear in aught thy gaze,
 I dared look up . . . but dared not long.

“Wait, maiden, wait! if none are here
 Bearing a charm to charm a tear,
 There may (who knows?) be found at last
 Some solace for the sorrow past.”

My mother, ere the sounds had ceas'd,
 Burst in, and drew me down:
 Her joy o'erpowered us both, her breast
 Covered lost friends and ruin'd town.

Sweet thought! but yielding now
 To many harsher! By what blow
 Art thou dissevered from me? War,
 That hath career'd too far,
 Closeth his pinions . . . “Come, Phraortes come
 To thy fond friends at home!”

[⁶First ed.: “are they.”]

Thus beckons Love . . . Away then, wishes wild !
 O may thy mother be as blest
 As one whose eyes will sink to rest
 Blessing thee for her rescued child !

Ungenerous still my heart must be ;
 Throughout the young and festive train
 Which thou revisitest again
 May none be happier (this I fear) than she !

XC.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

PERHAPS I like the Ode of Aletheia more than you do, because you sent it me ; and you perhaps would have liked it more than I, had I sent it you. There are writings which must lie long upon the straw before they mellow to the taste ; and there are summer fruits that cannot abide the keeping.

My heart assures me that Aletheia, had she lived, might have excelled in poetry ; and the loss of a lover is a help to it. We must defer our attempts to ascertain her station in the world of poetry : for we never see the just dimensions of what is close before our eyes. Faults are best discovered near, and beauties at some distance.

Aletheia, who found favour with Cleone, is surely not unworthy to take her seat in the library of Pericles.

I will look for a cyclamen to place within the scroll : I must find it and gather it, and place it there myself. Sweet hapless Aletheia !

XCI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

NOTHING is pleasanter to me than exploring in a library. What a delight in being a discoverer ! Among a loose accumulation of poetry, the greater part excessively bad, the verses I am about to transcribe are perhaps the least so.

Life passes not as some men say,
 If you will only urge his stay,
 And treat him kindly all the while.
 He flies the dizzy strife of towns,
 Cowers before thunder-bearing frowns,
 But freshens up again at song and smile.

Ardalia ! we will place him here,
 And promise that nor sigh nor tear
 Shall ever trouble his repose.
 What precious seal will you impress
 To ratify his happiness ?
 That rose thro' which you breathe ?—Come, bring that rose.

XCII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

KNOWING how desirous I have always been to learn the history of Athens for these last fifty years, and chiefly that part of it which my Pericles has partaken so largely ; and to reward my forbearance in abstaining from every close and importunate inquiry, he placed a scrap of paper in my hands this morning.

“ Read that,” said he.

It was no easy matter : few sentences would have been legible without my interpreter ; indeed there were not many unerased.

“ This speech,” replied he, “ occupied me one whole night, and somewhat of the next morning : I had so very much *not to say*.”

Aware that the party of Cimon would interest the people in his behalf, so that a leader from among his relatives or friends might be proposed and brought forward, Pericles was resolved to anticipate these exertions. See his few words.

“ We have lost, O Athenians ! not a town, nor a battle ; these you would soon regain ; but we have lost a great man, a true lover of his country, Cimon, son of Miltiades.

“ I well remember the grief you manifested at the necessity of removing him, for a time, from among the insidious men who would have worked upon his generous temper, ductile as gold. Never could I have believed I had sufficient interest with some I see before me, firm almost unto hardness, whose patriotism and probity had been the most alarmed ; but they listened to me with patience, and revoked the sentence of banishment. Cimon returned from Sparta, took the command of your armies, vanquished the Persians, and imposed on them such conditions as will humble their pride for ever.

“ Our fathers were ungenerous to his : we will, as becomes

us, pay their debts, and remove the dust from their memory. Miltiades was always great, and only once unsuccessful ;⁷ Cimon was greater, and never unfortunate, but in the temporary privation of your affections. History offers us no example of so consummate a commander.

“ I propose that a statue be erected to Cimon, son of Miltiades, vanquisher of the Persians.”

XCIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

THERE are secrets which not even love should try to penetrate. I am afraid of knowing who caused the banishment of Cimon ;⁸ certainly he was impeached by Pericles, who nevertheless praised him highly whenever his name was mentioned. He has allowed me to transcribe his speech after the sentence of the judges, and with it his letter of recall.

TO THE ATHENIANS,

On the Banishment of Cimon.

In your wisdom, O Athenians, you have decreed that Cimon, son of Miltiades, be exiled from our city.

Whatever may have been the errors or the crimes of Cimon, much of them should, in justice to yourselves, and in humanity to the prosecuted, be ascribed to the perversity of that faction, which never ceases or relaxes in its attempts to thwart your determinations, and to deprive you of authority at home, of respect in the sight of Greece.

But I adjure you to remember the services both of Cimon and of Miltiades ; and to afford the banished man no reason or plea to call in question your liberality. Permit the rents of his many farms in Attica to be carried to him in Sparta ; and

[⁷ At the siege of Paros. For the discreditable story see Herodotus, vi. 132.]

[⁸ “ Pericles likewise caused Cimon to be banished by the ostracism as an enemy to the people ; a man who in birth and fortune had no superior, who had gained very glorious victories over the barbarians, and filled the city with money and other spoils, as we have stated.”—Langhorne’s *Plutarch, Pericles.*]

let it never be said that a citizen of Athens was obliged to the most illiberal and penurious people for a sustenance. Not indeed that there is any danger of Sparta entertaining him too honourably. She may pay for services ; but rather for those which are to be performed, than for those which have been ; and to the man rather who may do her harm, than to him who can do it no longer.

Let us hope that, at some future day, Cimon may be aware of his mistake, and regard with more veneration the image of his father, than the throne of his father's enemy.

XCIV.

LETTER OF PERICLES TO CIMON.

THERE are few cities, O Cimon, that have men for their inhabitants. Whatever is out of Greece, and not Grecian, is nearer the animal world than the intellectual : some even in Greece are but midway. Leave them behind you ; return to your country, and conquer her assailants. Wholesome is the wisdom that we have gathered from misfortune,⁹ and sweet the repose that dwells upon renown.

XCV.¹⁰

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

GENERALLY we are little apt to exaggerate merit. In our maladies of the mind the cold fit usually is longer and more intense than the hot, and our dreams are rarely of water in the desert. We must have been among the departed before we experience this sensation. In our road through life, we may happen to meet with a man casting a stone reverentially to enlarge the cairn of another, which stone he had carried in his bosom to sling against that very other's head. Seriously, my Cleone, I am inclined to think that even in these dark days (as they are called) of literature we may occasionally catch a

[⁹ Not in 1st ed., where this letter ends "and beautiful the life that is the peristyle of immortality." Many of Landor's alterations, like this one, seem to be intended to exclude all suspicion of post-classical feeling.]

[¹⁰ Not in 1st ed.]

glimpse of poetry. We should be laughed at if we ventured to compare the living with the dead, who always are preferable, but there are choruses in Sophocles and Euripides as pathetical as those tender words of Sappho in her invocation to Hesperos: "Thou bringest the wine, thou bringest the kid, thou bringest the maiden to her mother." Certainly these words are very unsophistical, and they who have seen others weep at them, weep also. But pardon me if, looking attentively, you find no letter in the sentence obliterated by a tear of mine. Sometimes I fancy that the facility and pliancy of our language is the reason why many of the most applauded verses are written with more intenseness of feeling and less expenditure of thought. What is graceful must be easy; but many things are very easy which are not very graceful. There is a great deal even of Attic poetry in which a slight covering of wax is drawn over a bundle of the commonest tow and tatters: we must not bring it too near the lamp. But it is something to abstain from an indulgence in grossness, prolixity, and exaggeration, which are never the signs of fertility, but frequently the reverse. This abstinence is truly Attic, but Attic not exclusively: for Pindar has given manifold examples of it, and is heavy and tedious, then, only when he wipes away the foam off his bit with old stories and dry genealogies.

SPEECH OF PERICLES.

On the Defection of Eubœa and Megara.

Eubœa has rejected our authority and alliance, Megara our friendship. Under what pretext? That we have employed in the decoration of our city the sums of money they stipulated to contribute annually; a subsidy to resist the Persians. What! must we continue a war of extermination with Persia, when she no longer has the power to molest us? when peace¹¹

[¹¹ "These events (Cimon's victories) so humbled the king of Persia that he came into that famous peace, which limited him to a distance of a day's journey from the Grecian seas; and by which he engaged that none of his galleys or other ships of war should ever come within the Cyanean and Chelidonian islands."—*Langhorne's Plutarch, Cimon.*]

has been sworn and proclaimed? Do we violate the compact with our confederates? No; men of Athens! our fleets are in harbour, every ship in good condition; our arsenals are well-stored; and we are as prompt and as able now to repel aggression as we ever were.

Are our dues then to be withholden from us, because we have anticipated our engagements? because our navy and our army are in readiness before they are wanted? because, while our ungrateful allies were plotting our ruin, we were watching over their interests and providing for their security? States, like private men, are subject to the distemper of ingratitude, erasing from their memory the impression of past benefits: but it appears to be peculiar to the Megarians to recompense them with hatred and animosity. Not only have we protected them from aggression, by building for them the very walls¹² from which they now defy us; but, when Mardonius sent against them, at Mount Cithæron,¹³ the whole force of the Median cavalry, under the command of Magestius, and when they called aloud to every near battalion of the Grecian army, and when Pausanias in vain repeated the exhortation, three hundred Athenians, led by Olympiodorus son of Lampon, threw themselves forward from Erythræ, and, after losing many brave comrades, rescued from imminent death the fathers of those degenerate men who are now in the vanguard of conspirators against us. Ingratitude may be left to the chastisement of the Gods, but the sword must consolidate broken treaties. No state can be respected if fragment after fragment may be detached from it with impunity; if traitors are permitted to delude and discompose the contented, and to seduce the ignorant from their allegiance; if loyalty is proclaimed a weakness, sedition a duty, conspiracy wisdom, and rebellion

[¹² "The Megarians therefore, quitting the alliance of the Lacedemonians, joined themselves to the Athenians, because the Corinthians were pressing hard upon their frontiers. Accordingly, the Athenians put garrisons into Megara and Pege, and built for the Megarians the long walls between Nisæa and Megara and garrisoned these also."—*Thucydides*, i. 103. 4.]

[¹³ This incident, which took place shortly before the battle of Platæa, is related by Herodotus, ix. 19. Magestios is usually called Makistius or Masisius, the latter being the Greek spelling.]

heroism. It is a crime then for us to embellish our city! it is a reproach to enlarge and fortify our harbours! In vain have we represented to the clamorous and refractory, that their annual contributions are partly due to us for past exertions, and partly the price of our protection at this time, and in future; and not against Persia only, but against pirates. Our enemies have persuaded them that rebellion and war are better things our enemies, who were lately theirs, and who by this perfidious instigation are about to become so more cruelly than ever. Are Athenians avaricious? are Athenians oppressive? Even the slaves in our city have easier access to the comforts and delights of life than the citizens of almost any other. Until of late the Megarians were proud of our consanguinity,¹⁴ and refused to be called the descendants of Apollo, in hopes to be acknowledged as the children of Pandion. Although in later times they became the allies of Sparta, they cannot but remember that we have always been their friends; often their deliverers; and it is only for their dishonesty and perfidy that we now are resolved at last to prohibit them from the advantages of our ports. Sparta and Corinth have instigated them; Corinth, whose pride and injustice have driven¹⁵ Corcyra, with her fleets, to seek deliverance in the Piræus. What have we to fear from so strange a union as that of Corinth and Sparta? Are any two nations so unlike? so little formed for mutual succour or for mutual esteem? Hitherto we have shared both our wealth and our dangers with Eubœa. At the conclusion of a successful war, at the signature of a most honourable and advantageous peace, we are derided and reproached. What is it they discover to despise in us? I will tell you what it is. It is the timid step of blind men: this they saw in us while they were tampering with Sparta. Not ashamed of their seduction, they now walk hand in hand, with open front, and call others to join in their infamy. They have

[¹⁴ According to Pausanias, the Megarians connected the origin of their city with Pandion, who was also king of Athens. There was, however, another tradition relating that Megara derived its name from Megareus, the son of Poseidon, who was killed during the successful attack on the city made by Minos, king of Crete. After its destruction the city was said to have been rebuilt by Apollo.]

[¹⁵ First ed.: "excited."]

renounced our amity, they have spurned our expostulations, they have torn our treaties, and they have defied our arms. At the peril of being called a bad citizen, I lament your blindness, O Megara and Eubœa !

XCVI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I FIND, among the few records in my hands, that Pericles went in person, and conquered the faithless Megara and the refractory Eubœa.¹⁶ Before he sailed to attack the island, he warned the Athenians against an inconsiderate parsimony, which usually terminates in fruitless expenditure. He told them plainly that Eubœa was capable of a protracted and obstinate resistance ; and he admonished them that, whatever reverses the arms of Athens might experience, they should continue the war, and consider the dominion of the island a thing necessary to their existence as a nation ; that whoever should devise or counsel the separation of Eubœa from Athens, be declared guilty of treason, and punished with death.

“ If Thebes, in a future war,” said he, “ should take possession of this productive country, and shut up, as she easily might, the passage of the Euripus, she would gain an ascendancy over us, from which we never could recover. Losses, defeats, inadequate supplies, may tempt her ; she would always have Sparta for an ally on such an occasion. Indeed, it is wonderful that the Bœotians, as brave a race of men as any in Greece, and stronger in body,¹⁷ should not have been her masters. Perhaps it is the fertility of her own territory that kept her content with her possessions, and indisposed the cultivators of so rich a soil from enterprise and hazard. Eubœa

[¹⁶ The conquest of Megara did not take place, though the Athenians took possession of Nisæa, the port of that town. Pericles and the Athenians were likely to be cautious at this particular time ; for the reconquest of Eubœa took place not long after the disastrous battle of Coronea, where an Athenian army under Tolmides had been crushed by the Bœotians. The result of this defeat was the loss of all the empire the Athenians possessed upon the mainland.]

[¹⁷ First ed. : “ in the body.”]

is no less fertile than Boeotia, from which she is separated by the distance of a stone's throw. Give me fifty galleys, and five thousand men, and Euboea shall fall ere Sparta can come to her assistance."

XCVII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

PERPETUAL as has been the wars of Attica, she is overpeopled.¹⁸ A colony hoisted sail for the Chersonese; another to repeople the ruined walls of Sybaris. Happy the families whose fathers give them lands to cultivate, instead of keeping them in idleness at home; such are the founders of colonies. The language of this city is spoken in Italy, in Sicily, in Asia, in Africa, and even on the coast of Gaul, among the yelpings and yells of Kimbers and Sicambers.

Surely the more beneficent of the Gods must look down with delight on these fruit-trees planted in the forest. May the healthfullest dews of heaven descend on them!

We are now busied in the Propylæa¹⁹; they, although unfinished, are truly magnificent. Which will remain the longest, the traces of the walls or of the colonies? Of the future we know nothing, of the past little, of the present less; the mirror is too close to our eyes, and our own breath dims it.

XCVIII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

I HAVE only time to send you a few perfumes and a few verses. These I transcribe out of a little volume of Erinna; ²⁰ the perfumes came to me from Syria.

[¹⁸ "He likewise sent a colony of a thousand men to the Chersonese, five hundred to Naxos, two hundred and fifty to Andros, one thousand to the country of the Bisallæ in Thrace and others into Italy who settled in Sybaris and changed its name to Thurii."—*Langhorne's Plutarch, Pericles.*]

[¹⁹ "The *vestibule* of the citadel was finished in nine years by Mnesicles, the architect."—*Langhorne's Plutarch, Pericles.*]

[²⁰ "This waxen tablet from Lesbos holds Erinna's work; and, though it be but small, each cell is filled with the honey of the Muses. For her three hundred verses are like to Homer's, and these she wrote

Blessed be the man whose beneficent providence gave the flowers another life ! We seem to retain their love when their beauty has departed.

ERINNA TO LEUCONÖE.

If comfort is unwelcome, can I think
Reproof aught else will be !
The cup I bring to cool thee, wilt thou drink,
Fever'd Leuconöe ?

Rather with Grief than Friendship wouldest thou dwell,
Because Love smiles no more !
Bent down byculling bitter herbs, to swell
A cauldron that boils o'er.

XCIX.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

THANKS for the verses ! I hope Leuconöe was as grateful as I am, and as sensible to their power of soothing.

Thanks too for the perfumes ! Pericles is ashamed of acknowledging he is fond of them ; but I am resolved to betray one secret of his : I have caught him several times *trying* them, as he called it.

How many things are there that people pretend to dislike, without any reason, as far as we know, for the dislike or the pretence !

I love sweet odours. Surely my Cleone herself must have breathed her very soul into these ! Let me smell them again : let me inhale them into the sanctuary of my breast, lighted up by her love for their reception.

But, ah Cleone ! what an importunate and exacting creature is Aspasia ! Have you no willows fresh-peeled ? none lying upon the bank for baskets, white, rounded, and delicate as your fingers ! How fragrant²⁰ they were formerly ! I have seen none lately. Do you remember the cross old Hermesonax ! how he ran to beat us for breaking his twigs ? and

when but a maid of nineteen years. In fear of her mother, she stood close to the spindle or weaving at the loom, she whom the Muses had chosen for their servant"—*Anthology*, ix. 190.]

[²⁰ First ed. : " very fragrant."]

how, after looking in our faces, he seated himself down again, finished his basket, disbursed from a goat-skin a corroded clod of rancid cheese, put it in, pushed it to us, forced it under my arm, told us to carry it home *with the Gods!* and lifted up both hands and blest us!

I do not wish *that* one exactly ; cheese is the cruellest of deaths to me, and Pericles abhors it.

I am running over trifling occurrences which you must have forgotten. You are upon the spot, and have no occasion to recall to memory how the munificent old basket-maker looked after us, no seeing his dog at our heels ; how we coaxed the lean, shaggy, suspicious animal ; how many devices we contrived to throw down, or let slip, so that the good man might not observe ²¹ it, the pestilence you insisted on carrying ; how many names we called the dog by, ere we found the true one, *Cyrus* ; how, when we had drawn him behind the lentisk, we rewarded him for his assiduities, holding each an ear nevertheless, that he might not carry back the gift to his master ; and how we laughed at our fears, when a single jerk of the head served at once to engulf the treasure and to disengage him.

I shall always love the smell of the peeled willow. Have you none for me ? Is there no young poplar then, with a tear in his eye on bursting into bud ? I am not speaking by metaphor and asiatically. I want the poplars, the willows, the water-lilies, and the soft green herbage. How we enjoyed it on the Meander ! what liberties we took with it ! robbing it of the flowers it had educated, of those it was rearing, of those that came confidently out to meet us, and of those that hid themselves ; none escaped us. For these remembrances, green is the colour I love best. It brings me to the *Fortunate Island* and my Cleone ; it brings me back to Childhood, the proud little nurse of Youth, brighter of eye and lighter of heart than Youth herself.

These are not regrets, Cleone, they are respirations, necessary to existence. You may call them half-wishes, if you will. We are poor indeed, when we have no half-wishes left

[²¹ First ed. : "see."]

us. The heart and the imagination close the shutters the instant they are gone.

Do not chide me then for coming to you after the blossoms and buds and herbage : do not keep to yourself all the grass on the Meander. We used to share it ; we will now. I love it wherever I can get a glimpse of it. It is the home of the eyes, ever ready to receive them, and spreading its cool couch for their repose.

C.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

DEMOPHILE, poor honest faithful creature ! has yielded to her infirmities. I have spent almost as many hours with her in these last autumnal months, as I did in the earliest of my existence. She could not carry me in her arms again, but she was happy when mine were about her neck, and said they made her stronger. Do you remember how often she dropt my hand to take yours, because you never cried ? saying,

“ People never weep nor work, themselves, who can make others weep and work for them. That little one will have weeper and worker too about her presently. Look at her, Cleone ! Cannot you look like that ? Have not you two lips and two eyes ? Aspasia has not three. Try now ! Mind how I do it ! ”

Good simple heart !

When she was near her end, she said to me,

“ Do you ever go and read those names and bits of verses on the stones yonder ? You and Aspasia used formerly. Some of them tell us to be sad and sorry for folks who died a hundred years ago : others to imitate men and women we never should have had a chance of seeing, had they been living yet. All we can learn from them is this, that our city never had any bad people in it, but has been filled with weeping and wailing from its foundation upward.”

These things puzzled Demophile : she was somewhat vexed that she could not well comprehend them, but praised the Gods that our house was safe, when many others must have been rent asunder : such a power of lamentation !

“ My name,” said she, “ I believe, is a difficult and troublesome one to pinfold in a tombstone: nobody has ever tried how it would sound in verse: but, if you and Aspasia think me worth remembering, I am sure you could do more with it than others could; and you would lead your little ones, when the Gods have given you any, to come and see it, and tell them many things of old Demophile.”

I assured her that, if I outlived her, I would prove, in the manner she wished, that my memory and love outlived her likewise.

She died two days afterward.

Nothing is difficult, not even an epitaph, if we prefer the thoughts that come without calling, and receive the first as the best and truest. I would not close my eyes to sleep until I had performed my promise.

Demophile rests here: we will not say
That she was aged, lest ye turn away;
Nor that she long had suffered: early woes
Alone can touch you; go, and pity those!

C.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

AH poor Demophile! she remembered me then! How sorry I am I cannot tell her I remember her!

Cleone! there are little things that leave no little regrets. I might have said kind words, and perhaps have done kind actions, to many who now are beyond the reach of them. One look on the unfortunate might have given a day's happiness; one sigh over the pillow of sickness might have ensured a night's repose; one whisper might have driven from their victim the furies of despair.

We think too much upon *what* the Gods have given us, and too little *why*.

We both are young; and yet we have seen several who loved us pass away; and we never can live over again as we lived before. A portion of our lives is consumed by the torch we follow at their funerals. We enter into another

state of existence, resembling indeed and partaking of the former, but another! it contains the substance of the same sorrows, the shadow of the same joys. Alas! how true are the words of the old poet.

We lose a life in every friend we lose,
And every death is painful but the last.

I often think of my beautiful nurse, Myrtale, now married very happily in Clazomenai. My first verses were upon her. These are the verses I thought so good, that I wrote a long dissertation on the trochaic metre, to prove it the most magnificent of metres; and I mentioned in it all the poets that ever wrote, from epigrammatic to epic, praising some and censuring others, a judge without appeal upon all.

How you laughed at me! Do you remember the lines? I wonder they are not worse than they are.

Myrtale! may heaven reward thee
For thy tenderness and care!
Dressing me in all thy virtues,
Docile, dutious, gentle, fair.

One alone thou never heededst,
I can boast that one alone;
Grateful beats the heart thy nursling,
Myrtale! 'tis all thy own.

CH.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

RECEIVE old Lycoris, and treat her affably. She has much influence in her tribe. The elderly of your sex possess no small authority in our city, and I suspect that in others too they have their sway. She made me tremble once. Philotas asked her how she liked my speech, I forgot upon what occasion: she answered,

“ His words are current words, and ring well; but unless he gives us more of them for the trouble of our attendance, he shall not be archon, I promise him.”

Now I know not how long I could protract a speech, nor how long I could keep my head under water: these are

accomplishments I have never studied. Lycoris and I are still friends however. In my favour she has waved her promise, and lets me be an ²² archon.*

CIII.²³

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

IT is difficult and unsafe to pick up a pearl dropped by Alcman. Usually it is moist with the salt of its habitation ; and something not quite cleanly may be found adhering to it. Here, however, is one which even my chaste Cleone may look down on with complacency.

“ So pure my love is, I could light
The torch on Aglae’s wedding-night,
Nor bend its flame with sighs,
See, from beneath, her chamber door
Unclose and bride maids trip before,
With undejected eyes.”

Cupid stood near and heard this said,
And full of malice shook his head,
Then cried, “ I’ll trust him when he swears
He cannot mount the first three stairs ;
Even then I’ll take one look below,
And see with my own eyes ‘ Tis so.”

And even Mimnermus, who bears but an indifferent character with the chaste, is irreproachable in those verses, which he appears to have written in the decline of life.

Love ran with me, then walk’d, then sate,
Then said, “ Come, come ! it grows too late ; ”
And then he would have gone—but—no,
You caught his eye ; he could not go.

[²² First ed. reads : “ be archon.”]

* Plutarch says he never was archon ; he means perhaps *first* archon. [The passage from Plutarch referred to in the note runs as follows :—“ having never had the fortune to be chosen archon, thesmothetes, king of the sacred rites or polemarch. For persons were of old appointed to those offices by lot.”—Langhorne’s *Plutarch, Pericles.*] [²³ Not in 1st ed.]

CIV.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

SEND me a note whenever you are idle and thinking of me, dear Aspasia! Send it always by some old slave, ill-drest. The people will think it a petition, or something as good, and they will be sure to observe the pleasure it throws into my countenance. Two winds at once will blow into my sails, each helping me onward.

If I am tired, your letter will refresh me; if occupied, it will give me activity. Beside, what a deal of time we lose in business!

CV.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

WOULD to heaven, O Pericles! you had no business at all, but the conversation of your friends. You must always be the greatest man in the city, whoever may be the most popular. I wish we could spend the whole day together; must it never be? Are you not already in possession of all you ever contended for?

It is time, methinks, that you should leave off speaking in public, for you begin to be negligent and incorrect. I am to write you a note whenever I am idle and thinking of you!

Pericles! Pericles! how far is it from idleness to think of you! We come to rest before we come to idleness.

CVI.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

IN our republic it is no easy thing to obtain an act of divorce from power. It usually is delivered to us by the messenger of Death, or presented in due form by our judges where the oyster²⁴ keeps open house.

[²⁴ "The ostracism was conducted in the following manner:—Every citizen took a piece of broken pot or a shell on which he wrote the name of the person he wanted to have banished, and carried it to a part of the market-place that was enclosed with wooden rails. The magistrates then counted the number of the shells; and if it amounted not to six thousand, the ostracism stood for nothing. If it did, they sorted the shells, and the person whose name was found on the greatest number was declared an exile for ten years, but with permission to enjoy his property.—*Langhorne's Plutarch, Aristides.*"]

Now, oysters are quite out of season in the summer of life ; and life, just about this time, I do assure you, is often worth keeping. I thought so even before I knew you, when I thought but little about the matter. It is a casket not precious in itself, but valuable in proportion to what Fortune, or Industry, or Virtue, has placed within it.

CVII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

WHEN Pericles is too grave and silent, I usually take up my harp and sing to it ; for music is often acceptable to the ear when it would avoid or repose from discourse. He tells me that it not only excites the imagination, but invigorates eloquence and refreshes memory : that playing on my harp to him is like besprinkling a tessellated pavement with odoriferous water, which brings out the images, cools the apartment, and gratifies the senses by its fragrance.

“ That instrument,” said he, “ is the rod of Hermes ; it calls up the spirits from below, or conducts them back again to Elysium. With what ecstacy do I throb and quiver under those refreshing showers of sound ! ”

Come sprinkle me soft music o'er the breast,
Bring me the varied colours into light
That now obscurely on its tablet rest,
Shew me its flowers and figures fresh and bright.

Waked at thy voice and touch, again the chords
Restore what restless years had moved away,
Restore the glowing cheeks, the tender words,
Youth's short-lived spring and Pleasure's summer-day.

I believe he composed these verses while I was playing, although he disowns them, asking me whether I am willing to imagine that my execution is become so powerless.

You remember my old song : it was this I had been playing.

(*Song.*)

The reeds were green the other day,
Among the reeds we loved to play,
We loved to play while they were green.

The reeds are hard and yellow now,
No more their tufted heads they bow
To beckon us behind the scene.

“What is it like?” my mother said
And laid her hand upon my head;
“Mother! I cannot tell indeed.
I’ve thought of all hard things I know,
I’ve thought of all the yellow too;
It only can be like the reed.”

CVIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

PANENOS²⁵ is our best painter: he was educated by Pheidias, who excels all the painters in correctness of design. Panenos has travelled in Egypt, in which country, he tells us, the colours are as fresh upon the walls of the temples as when they were painted; two thousand years ago. Pericles wishes to have a representation of me in the beginning of every Olympiad. Alas! what an imprudence! The most youthful lover never committed one greater.

I will not send a stranger to you, Cleone! I will send the fugitive of Miletus when Epimedea was giving her the lecture in the bath. Be quiet now; say nothing; even the bath itself is quite imaginary.

Panenos plays upon the harp. I praised him for the simplicity and melody of the tune, and for his execution. He was but little pleased.

“Lady,” said he to me, “a painter can be two things; he can be painter and statuary, which is much the easier: make him a third, and you reduce him to nothing.”

“Yet Pericles,” said I, “plays rather well.”

“Rather well, I can believe,” said he, “because I know that his master was Damon, who was very skilful and very

[²⁵ In the temple of Zeus at Olympia “that part of the wall which is opposite the door is simply painted blue, but all the rest is painted with pictures by Panenos. . . . This Panenos was the brother of Pheidias, and painted the picture of the battle of Marathon in the Pœcile at Athens.”—*Pausanias*, v. 11. 5.]

diligent. Damon,²⁶ like every clever composer I have met with, or indeed ever heard of, was a child in levity and dissipation. His life was half feast, half concert."

"But Panenos," said I, "surely we may be fond of music, and yet stand a little on this side of idiocy."

"Aspasia!" he replied, "he who loves not music is a beast of one species; he who overloves it is a beast of another, whose brain is smaller than a nightingale's, and his heart than a lizard's. Record me one memorable saying, one witticism, one just remark, of any great musician, and I consent to undergo the punishment of Marsyas. Some among them are innocent and worthy men; not many, nor the first. Dissipation, and, what is strange, selfishness, and disregard to punctuality in engagements, are common and nearly general in the more distinguished of them."

"O Music! how it grieves me, that imprudence, intemperance, gluttony, should open their channels into thy sacred stream!"

Panenos said this: let us never believe a word of it. He himself plays admirably, although no composer.

CIX.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

O ASPASIA! have you heard (you surely must) that the people of Samos²⁷ have declared war against us? It is hardly sixty years since our beautiful city was captured and destroyed by the Persians. In vain hath she risen from her ashes with fresh splendour. Another Phrynicus will have perhaps to write another tragedy upon us.

Is it an offence to be flourishing and happy?

The unfortunate meet and embrace: the fortunate meet and tear each other to pieces. What wonder that the righteous Gods allow to prosperity so brief a space!

[²⁶ Plutarch gives a different account of Damon. "As for Damon, he seems to have been a politician who, under the pretence of teaching music, concealed his great abilities from the vulgar."—*Langhorne's Plutarch, Pericles.*.]

[²⁷ "In the sixth year of the truce, war broke out between Samos and Miletus concerning the town of Priene."—*Thucydides*, i. 115. 2.]

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Be composed and tranquil : read the speech of Pericles to the Athenians.

SPEECH OF PERICLES.

“ The Milesians, it appears, have sent ambassadors to you, O men of Athens ! not entreating the co-operation of your arms, but the interposition of your wisdom and integrity. They have not spoken, nor indeed can they deem it necessary to speak, of dangers recently undergone together with you, of ancient, faithful, indissoluble alliances, or the glory of descending from the same forefathers. On this plea Miletus might have claimed as a right what she solicits as a favour.

“ Samos, O Athenians, has dared to declare war against the people of Miletus. She envies us our commerce, and, unable to find a plea for assailing us, strikes our friend in our sight, and looks impudently in our faces to see whether we will resent it.

“ No, Athenians, we will not resent it, until we have sent ambassadors, to ask her why she has taken up arms against the peaceful and unoffending ? It were well were it permitted us to abstain. Yes, I feel I am hazarding your favour by recommending delay and procrastination : but I do not apprehend that we are losing much time. We have weapons, we have ships, we have the same soldiers who quelled braver enemies. The vanquished seem again to be filling up the ranks we have thinned. They murmur, they threaten, they conspire, they prepare (and preparation denounces it) hostility. Let them come forth against us. Wealth rises up to our succour in that harbour : Glory stands firm and bids them defiance on those walls.

“ Wait, wait ! twenty days only ; ten ; not ten ?

“ Little becomes it me, O Athenians ! to oppose your wishes or to abate your ardour.

“ Depart then, heralds ! and carry with you war.”

CXI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I HAVE asked Pericles to let me see all his speeches. He declared to me that he has kept no copies, but promised that he would attempt to recover some of them from his friends. I was disappointed and grieved, and told him I was angry with him. He answered thus, taking me by the hand.

“ So, you really are angry that I have been negligent in the preservation of my speeches, after all my labour in modelling and correcting them. You are anxious that I should be praised as a writer, by writers who direct the public in these matters. Aspasia ! I know their value. Understand me correctly and comprehensively. I mean partly the intrinsic worth of their commendations, and partly (as we pay in the price of our utensils) the fashion. I have been accused of squandering away both the public money and my own : nobody shall ever accuse me of paying three obols for the most grandly embossed and most sonorous panegyric. I would excite the pleasure (it were too much to say the admiration) of judicious and thoughtful men ; but I would neither soothe nor irritate these busybodies. I have neither honey nor lime for ants. We know that good writers are often gratified by the commendation of bad ones ; and that even when the learned and intelligent have brought the materials to crown their merits, they have looked toward the door, at some petulant smirking page, for the thread that was to bind the chaplet. Little do I wish to hear what I am, much less what I am not. Enough for me to feel the consciousness and effect of health and strength : surely it is better than to be told by those who salute me that I am looking very well.

“ You may reply that the question turns not upon compliments, but upon censure.

“ Really I know not what my censurers may write, never having had the advantage of reading their lucubrations ; all I know is this, if I am not *their* Pericles, I am at least the Pericles of Aspasia and the Athenians.”

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

WE were conversing on oratory and orators, when Anaxagoras said, looking at Pericles and smiling,

“They are described by Hesiod in two verses, which he applies to himself and the poets :

Lies very like the truth we tell,
And, when we wish it, truth as well.”

Meton relaxed from his usual seriousness, but had no suspicion of the application, saying,

“Cleverly applied indeed !”

Pericles enjoyed equally the simplicity of Meton and the slyness of Anaxagoras, and said,

“Meton ! our friend Anaxagoras is so modest a man, that the least we can do for him is to acknowledge his claims as heir general to Hesiod. See them registered.”

I have never observed the temper of Pericles either above or below the enjoyment of a joke ; he invites and retaliates, but never begins, lest he should appear to take a liberty.

There are proud men of so much delicacy, that it almost conceals their pride, and perfectly excuses it.

Meton never talks, but answers questions with great politeness, although with less clearness and precision than you would expect. I remarked to him, one evening, that mathematicians had great advantages over others in disputation, from the habitude they had acquired of exactness in solving their problems.

“We mathematicians,” answered he, “lay claim to this precision. I need not mention to you, Aspasia, that of all the people who assemble at your house, I am the only one that ever wants a thought or word. We are exact in our own proper workmanship. Give us time and we can discover what is false in logic ; but I never was acquainted with a mathematician who was ready at correcting in himself a flaw of ratiocination, or who produced the fitting thing in any moderate time. Composition is quite beyond our sphere. I am not envious of others ; but I often regret in myself that,

while they are delivering their opinions freely and easily, I am arranging mine ; and that, in common with all the mathematicians of my acquaintance, I am no prompt debater, no acute logician, no clear expositor, but begin in hesitation and finish in confusion."

I assure you, Cleone, I have been obliged to give order and regularity to these few words of the wise contemplative Meton, and to remove from among them many that were superfluous and repeated. When he had paused, I told him I sometimes wished he would exercise his powerful mind in conversation.

" I have hardly time," said he, " for study, much less for disputation. Rarely have I known a disputant who, however dexterous, did not either drive by Truth or over her, or who stopped to salute her, unless he had something fine or novel to display. He would stumble over my cubes and spheres, and I should leave my leg in his noose."

" And yet Anaxagoras and you agree well together," said I.

" Anaxagoras," replied he, " usually asks me short questions, and helps me himself to explain them. He comes to me when I am alone, and would find no pleasure in showing to others my perplexity. Seldom do I let him go again, until he has given me some help or some incitement in my studies. He suggests many things—"

" Silence, good Meton ! " cried Anaxagoras, " or I may begin to talk of a luminary whose light has not yet reached the earth."

The three men smiled, they have some meaning uncommunicated to me. Perhaps it is a remark of Pericles, in encouragement of Anaxagoras, that, while others pass before us like a half-obol towlink across a dark alley, and dazzle and disappear, his loftier light has not yet come down to the intellects of his fellow-citizens ; or perhaps it may really have a reference to some discovery in astronomy.

Pericles goes in person to command the expedition against Samos. He promises me it will soon be ready to sail, and tells me to expect him back again within a few months.

Artemon²⁸ is preparing machines of great magnitude for the attack of the city. He teaches me that the Samians are brave and wealthy, and that no city is capable of such a resistance. Certainly never were such preparations. I hope at least that the report of them will detain your enemies at home, and at all events that, before they land, you will leave Miletus and come to me. The war is very popular at Athens: I dare say it is equally so at Samos—equally so at Miletus. Nothing pleases men like renewing their ancient alliance with the brutes, and breaking off the more recent one with their fellow creatures.

War is it, O grave heads! that ye
 With stern and stately pomp decree?
 Inviting all the Gods from far
 To join you in the game of war!
 Have ye then lived so many years
 To find no purer joy than tears?
 And seek ye now the highest good
 In strife, in anguish, and in blood?
 Your wisdom may be more than ours,
 But you have spent your golden hours,
 And have methinks but little right
 To make the happier fret and fight.
 Ah! when will come the calmer day
 When these dark clouds shall pass away?
 When (should two cities disagree)
 The young, the beauteous, and the free,
 Rushing with all their force, shall meet,
 And struggle with embraces sweet,
 Till they who may have suffer'd most
 Give in, and own the battle lost.

Philosophy does not always play fair with us. She often eludes us when she has invited us, and leaves us when she has led us the farthest way from home. Perhaps it is because we have jumped up from our seats at the first lesson she would give us, and the easiest, and the best. There are few words in the precept,

[²⁸ "Pericles in this siege made use of battering engines, the invention of which he much admired, it being then a new one; and he had Artemon, the engineer, along with him, who, on account of his lameness, was carried about on a litter."—*Langhorne's Plutarch, Pericles.*.]

Give pleasure : receive it :
Avoid giving pain : avoid receiving it.

For the duller scholar, who may find it difficult to learn the whole, she cuts each line in the middle, and tells him kindly that it will serve the purpose, if he will but keep it in his memory.

CXIII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

WILL you never be serious, even upon the most serious occasions? There are so many Grecian states, on both continents and in the islands, that surely some could always be found both willing and proper to arbitrate on any dissension. If litigations are decided by arbiters when two men contend (as they often are), surely it would be an easier matter with cities and communities; for they are not liable to the irritation arising from violent words, nor to the hatred that springs up afresh between two men who strive for property, every time they come within sight. I believe the Greeks are the happiest people upon earth, or that ever are likely to exist upon it; and chiefly from their separation into small communities, independent governments, and laws made by the people for the people! But unless they come to the determination that no war whatever shall be undertaken until the causes of quarrel are examined, and the conditions of accommodation are proposed²⁹ by others, from whom impartiality is most reasonably to be expected, they will exist without enjoying the greatest advantage that the Gods have offered them. Religious men, I foresee, will be sorry to displease the God of battles. Let him have all the kingdoms of the world to himself, but I wish he would resign to the quieter Deities our little Greece.

Preparations are going on here for resistance to the Samians, and we hear that Athenian ships are cruising off their island.

In case of necessity, every thing is ready for my departure to the sources of the Meander. I will prove to you that I am not hurried nor frightened; I have leisure to write out what

[²⁹ First ed. : "both proposed and enforced."]

perhaps may be the last verses written in Miletus, unless we are relieved.

LITTLE AGLAE.

TO HER FATHER, ON HER STATUE BEING CALLED LIKE HER.

Father! the little girl we see
Is not, I fancy, so like me . . .
You never hold her on your knee.

When she came home the other day
You kiss'd her, but I cannot say
She kiss'd you first and ran away.

CXIV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

HERODORUS, on returning from his victory at the Olympian games, was the guest of Pericles. You saw him afterward ; and he might have told you that Pericles was urgent with him to remain at Athens. True, as a stranger, he would have been without influence here in political affairs. It is evident that he desires no such thing, but prefers, as literary men should always do, tranquillity and retirement. These he may enjoy in perfection where he is, and write the truth intrepidly. Pericles has more than once heard from him. Life passes in no part of the world so easily and placidly as among the Grecian colonies in Italy. They rarely quarrel, they have room enough, men enough, wealth enough, and not too much. One petty tyrant has sprung up among them lately, and has imprisoned, exiled, and murdered the best citizens.

Pericles was asked his advice what should be done with him. He answered,

“ I never interfere in the affairs of others. It appears to me that, where you have nothing but a weazel to hunt, you should not bring many dogs into the field, nor great ones ; but in fact the ratcatcher is the best counsellor on these occasions : he neither makes waste nor noise.”

The tyrant, we hear, is sickening, and many epitaphs are already composed for him : the shortest is,

The pigmy despot Mutinas lies here !
He was not godless ; no : his God was Fear.

Herodotus tells, that throughout the lower Italy, poverty is unknown ; every town well governed, every field well ploughed ; every meadow well irrigated, every vineyard pruned scientifically. The people choose their higher magistrates from the most intelligent, provided they are not needy. The only offices that are salaried are the lower, which all the citizens have an equal chance of attaining ; some by lot, some by suffrage. This is the secret why the governments are peaceful and durable. No rich man can become the richer for them ; every poor man may, but honestly and carefully.

CXV.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

CORINNA was honoured in her native place as greatly as abroad. This is the privilege of our sex. Pindar and *Æschylus* left their country, not because the lower orders were indifferent or unjust to them, but because those who were born their equals could not endure to see them rise their superiors.

What a war against the Gods is this !

It seems as if it were decreed by a public edict, that no one shall receive from them any gift above a certain value ; and that, if they do receive it, they shall be permitted to return the Gods no thanks for it in their native city.

So then ! republics must produce genius, and kings reward it !

So then ! Hiero and Archelaüs⁸⁰ must be elevated to the rank of Cimon and Pericles ! O shame ! O ignominy !

What afflicts me deeply is the intelligence we receive that Herodotus has left Ionia. He was crowned at the Olympian games ; he was invited to a public festival in every city he visited throughout the whole extent of Greece, even his own was pleased with him, yet he too has departed—not to Archelaüs or to Hiero, but to the retirement and tranquillity of Italy.

I do believe, Aspasia, that studious men, who look so quiet, are the most restless men in existence.

[⁸⁰ Like *Æschylus*, Euripides also left Athens. He settled at the court of Archelaüs in Thessaly. Herodotus, when he left Ionia, went to Thurii.]

ORATION OF PERICLES TO THE SOLDIERS ROUND SAMOS.

LITTLE time is now left us, O Athenians, between the consideration and the accomplishment of our duties. The justice of the cause, when it was first submitted to your decision in the Agora, was acknowledged with acclamations; the success of it you have insured by your irresistible energy. The port of Samos is in our possession, and we have occupied all the eminences round her walls. Patience is now as requisite to us as to the enemy: for, although every city which can be surrounded, can be captured, yet in some, where courage and numbers have been insufficient to drive off the besieger, Nature and Art may have thrown up obstacles to impede his progress. Such is Samos; the strongest fortress in Europe, excepting only Byzantium.⁸¹ But Byzantium fell before our fathers; and, unless she become less deaf to the reclamations of honour, less indifferent to the sanctitude of treaties; unless she prefer her fellow-soldiers to her common enemy, freedom to aristocracy, friends to strangers, Greeks to Asiatics, she shall abase her Thracian fierceness before us. However, we will neither spurn the suppliant nor punish the repentant: our arms we will turn for ever, as we turn them now, against the malicious rival, the alienated relative, the apostate confederate, and the proud oppressor. Where a sense of dignity is faint and feeble, and where reason hath lain unexercised and inert, many nations have occasionally been happy, and even flourishing under kings: but oligarchy hath ever been a curse to all, from its commencement to its close. To remove it eternally from the vicinity of Miletus, and from the well-disposed of that very city by which hostilities are denounced against her, is at once our interest and our duty. For oligarchs in every part of the world are necessarily our enemies, since we have already⁸² shown our fixed determination to aid and support with all our strength the defenders of civility and freedom. It is not in our power (for against our institutions and consciences we Athenians can do nothing), it is not in our power, I repeat it,

[⁸¹ "With the Samians, Byzantium also revolted."—*Thucydides*, i. 115. 5.]

[⁸² First ed.: "always."]

to sit idly by, while those who were our fellow-combatants against the Persian, and who suffered from his aggression even more than we did, are assailed by degenerate Ionians, whose usurpation rests on Persia.³³ We have enemies wherever there is injustice done to Greeks; and we will abolish that injustice, and we will quell those enemies. Wherever there are equal laws we have friends; and those friends we will succour, and those laws we will maintain. On which side do the considerate and religious look forward to the countenance of the Gods? Often have they deferred indeed their righteous judgments, but never have they deserted the long-suffering and the brave. Upon the ground where we were standing when you last heard my appeal to you, were not Xerxes and his myriads encamped? What drove them from it? The wisdom, force, and fortitude, breathed into your hearts by the immortal Gods. Preserve them with equal constancy; and your return, I promise you, shall not have been more glorious from Salamis than from Samos.

cxvi.³⁴

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I MUST always send you poetry when I find it, whether in a greater quantity or a smaller: not indeed all I happen to find; for certainly the most part, even of careful collection, is mere trash. If there is a word too much in sense or sentiment, it is no poem; just as, if there is a syllable in a verse too much, it is no metre. I speak only of these shorter; not of those which are long enough to stretch ourselves on and sleep in. There are poetical cooks so skilful in dividing the tendons of their cub-fed animals, that they contrive to fill a spacious dish with a few couples of the most meagre and tottering. From Athens you shall have nothing that is not Attic. I wish I could always give you the names of the authors.

[³³ "Certain of the Samians . . . entered into a confederacy with Pisuthnes, son of Hystaspes, who at that time was in power at Sardis."—*Thucydides*, i. 115, 4.]

[³⁴ Not in 1st ed.]

Look at that fountain ! Gods around
 Sit and enjoy its liquid sound.
 Come, come : why should not we draw near ?
 Let them look on : they cannot hear.
 But if they envy what we do,
 Say, have not Gods been happy too ?

The following were composed on a picture in which Cupid is represented tearing a rosebud.

Ah Cupid ! Cupid ! let alone
 That bud above the rest :
 The Graces wear it in their zone
 Thy mother on her breast,
 Does it not grieve thee to destroy
 So beautiful a flower ?
 If thou must do it, cruel boy,
 Far distant be the hour !
 If the sweet bloom (so tinged with fire
 From thy own torch) must die,
 Let it, oh generous Love ! expire
 Beneath a lover's sigh.

The next is, a Fawn to Eriopis, a wood-nymph, who had permitted a kiss, and was sorry for it.

Tell me, Eriopis, why
 Lies in shade that languid eye ?
 Hast thou caught the hunter's shout
 Far from Dian and without
 Any sister nymph to say
 Whither leads the downward way ?
 Trust me : never be afraid
 Of thy Fawn, my little maid,
 He will never call thee Dear,
 Press thy finger, pinch thy ear,
 To admire it overspread
 Swiftly with pellucid red,
 Nor shall broad and slender feet
 Under fruit-laid table meet.
 Doth not he already know
 All thy wandering, all thy woe ?
 Come ! to weep is now in vain,
 I will lead thee back again.
 Slight and harmless was the slip
 That but soil'd the sadden'd lip.
 Now the place is shown to me
 Peace and safety shall there be.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

SAMOS has fallen. Pericles will have given you this information long before my letter can reach you, and perhaps the joy of the light-hearted Athenians will be over ere then. So soon dies away the satisfaction of great exploits, even of such as have swept a generation from before us, have changed the fortunes of a thousand more, and indeed have shaken the last link in the remotest. We hear, but perhaps the estimate is exaggerated, that the walls of Miletus, of Ephesus, of Priene, are, in comparison to Samos, as the fences of a farm-yard are to them. Certain it is that the vanquished fleet was more formidable than the united navies of Corinth and of Carthage, which are rated as next in force to the Athenian.

By this conquest, we are delivered from imminent danger ; yet, I am ashamed to say it, our citizens are ungrateful already. It is by the exertions of the Athenians that they are not slaves ; and they reason as basely as if they were. They pretend to say that it was jealousy of Samos, and the sudden and vast increase of her maritime power, but by no means any affection for Miletus, which induced them to take up arms ! Athens had just reason for hostility ; why should she urge, in preference, unjust ones ? Alas ! if equity is supported by violence, little can be the wonder³⁵ if power be preceded by falsehood. Such a reflection may be womanish ; but are not all peculiarly so which are quiet, compassionate, and consistent ! The manly mind, in its continual course of impediments and cataracts, receives and gives few true images ; our stagnant life in this respect has greatly the advantage.

Xanthus, the friend (you remember) of poor Xeniades, fought as a volunteer in the Athenian army, and was entrusted with the despatches to our government.

“ Xanthus ! ” said the General, “ your countrymen will hereafter read your name, although it is not written here ; for we conquerors of Samos are no little jealous one of another. Go and congratulate the Milesians : they will understand us both.”

[³⁵ First ed. : “ wonderment.”]

I asked him many questions. He replied with much simplicity, "I was always too much in it to know anything about it. The principal thing I remember is, that Pericles (I was told) smiled at me for a moment in the heat of battle, and went on to another detachment."

CXVIII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

THE wind, I understand, has delayed my last letter in harbour, and continues adverse. Every day we receive some fresh vessel from Samos, and some new intelligence. True is it, we discover, that the prevailing party had been supported at once by the Peloponnesians and the Persians. The chastisement of the delinquents is represented as much⁸⁶ too mild. "They would have made us slaves, let us make them so." Such, with scourges and tortures, were the denunciations of the people and the soldiery; and more vehemently in Samos than in Miletus. The leaders of the oligarchy (now supprest for ever) were two men of low extraction, Lysimachus and Elpenor. We daily hear some story, well known in Samos only, of these incendiaries. Lysimachus was enriched by the collocation of his wife with an old dotard, worn out by gluttony and disordered in intellect. By his last testament, made when he had lost his senses, he bequeathed her fifty talents. The heirs refused to pay them; and Lysimachus would have pleaded her cause before the people, had they not driven him away with shouts and stones. Nevertheless he was thought a worthy champion of the faction, and the rather as his hatred of his fellow-citizens and former companions must be sincere and inextinguishable. Elpenor is far advanced in age. His elder son was wounded by accident, and died within the walls. Avarice and parsimony had always been his characteristics, under the veil however of morality and religion. The speech he made at the funeral is thus reported,

"It hath been, O men of Samos! the decree of the immortal Gods, whose names be ever blessed!"

[⁸⁶ First ed.: "very much."]

“ Hold hard there ! Cannot you see that there are no more sparks in the pyre ? . . . the wine smells sadly . . . throw no more on them . . . take it home to the cellar ” . . . “ to remove from my aged eyes, from my frail embraces, the delight of my life, the staff of my declining years, all spent in the service of my beloved country. It is true I have another son, rising out of his adolescence . . . here beside me . . . O my child ! Molismogis ! Molismogis ! on such a melancholy occasion dost thou, alas ! tie indissolubly and wastefully that beautiful piece of packthread ?³⁷ Thy poor bereaved mother may want it ; and it will fail her in the hour of need.”

Two torches were borne before the funeral. One of them presently gave signs rather prematurely emblematical of our mortal state, and could be restored to its functions by no exertion of the bearer, first waving it gently toward its companion, then shaking it with all his might, horizontally, vertically, diagonally, then holding it down despondingly to the earth. Elpenor beckoned to him, and asked him in his ear how much he had paid for it.

“ Half a drachma.”

“ Fraud ! ” cried Elpenor, “ fraud, even at the tomb ! before the dead, and before the Gods of the dead ! From whom did you make the purchase ? ”

“ From Gylippides, son of Agoracles.”

“ Tell Gylippides, son of Agoracles,” calmly said Elpenor, “ that in my love of equity, in my duty to the state, in my piety to the Gods, in my pure desire to preserve the tranquillity of his conscience, I cite him before the tribunal, unless he refund an obol.” Then aloud, “ It was not in this manner, O Athenians ! that our forefathers revered the dead.”

He gave way under his grief, and was carried back with little commiseration. Elpenor is among the richest men in Greece, unless the conquerors have curtailed his treasures. It is but reasonable that every thing such men possess should compensate the people for years of rapine, disunion, and

[³⁷ First ed. Here follows “ Hard knots ! hard knots ! hard fate ! hard fate ! ”]

turbulence ; for the evil laws they enacted, and for the better they mis-administered and perverted.

CXIX.⁸⁸

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

WORSE verses, it may be, than any of those which you lately sent to me affect me more. There is no giddiness in looking down the precipices of youth : it is the rapidity and heat of its course that brings the giddiness. When we are near its termination a chilly thrill comes over us, whether we look before or behind. Yet there is something like enchantment in the very sound of the word *youth*, and the calmest heart, at every season of life, beats in double time to it. Never expect a compensation for what you send me, whether prose or poetry : but expect a pleasure, because it has given me one. Now here are the worse verses for the better, the Milesian for the Attic.

We mind not how the sun in the mid sky
 Is hastening on ; but when the golden orb
 Strikes the extreme of earth, and when the gulphs
 Of air and Ocean open to receive him,
 Dampness and gloom invade us ; then we think
 Ah ! thus it is with youth. Too fast his feet
 Run on for sight ; hour follows hour ; fair maid
 Succeeds fair maid ; bright eyes bestar his couch ;
 The cheerful horn awakens him ; the feast,
 The revel, the entangling dance, allure,
 And voices mellower than the Muse's own
 Heave up his buoyant bosom on their wave.
 A little while, and then—Ah Youth ! dear Youth !
 Listen not to my words . . . but stay with me !
 When thou art gone, life may go too ; the sigh
 That follows is for thee, and not for Life.

CXX.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

ENOUGH, enough is it for me to see my Pericles safe at home again. Not a word has he spoken, not a question have I

[⁸⁸ Not in 1st ed.]

asked him, about the odious war of Samos. He made in Samos, I hear, a most impressive oration, to celebrate the obsequies of these brave soldiers who fell. In Athens, where all is exultation, he has rendered the slain the most glorious and ³⁹ triumphant, and the fatherless the proudest of the living. But at last how little worth is the praise of eloquence! Elpenor and Lysimachus lead councils and nations! Great Gods! Surely ye must pity us when we worship you . . . we, who obey, and appear to reverence, the vilest of our species! I recover my step; I will not again slip into this offal. Come, and away to Xanthus. Ay, ay, Cleone! Simplicity, bravery, well-merited and well-borne distinction! Take him, take him: we must not all be cruel . . . to ourselves.

CXXI.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

ASPASIA! you mistake. Grant me the presence of friendship and the memory of love! It is only in this condition that a woman can be secure from fears and other weaknesses. I may admire Xanthus; and there is pleasure in admiration. If I thought I could love him, I should begin to distrust and despise myself. I would not desecrate my heart, even were it in ruins; but I am happy, very happy; not indeed altogether as I was in early youth . . . perhaps it was youth itself that occasioned it. Let me think so! Indulge me in the silence and solitude of this one fancy. If there was anything else, how sacred should it ever be to me! Ah yes, there was! and sacred it is, and shall be.

Laodamia ⁴⁰ saw with gladness, not with passion, a God, conductor of her sole beloved. The shade of Xeniades follows the steps of Xanthus.

[³⁹ First ed.: "of the."]

[⁴⁰ Compare Wordsworth's poem, a favourite of Landor's.]

CXXII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

PARTIES of pleasure are setting sail, every day almost, for Samos. We begin to be very brave; we women, I mean. I suspect that no few of us take an unworthy delight in the humiliation and misery of the fair Samians. Not having seen, nor intending to see them myself, I can only tell you what I have heard of their calamities.

Loud outcries were raised by the popular orators against such of them as were suspected of favoring the Persian faction, and it was demanded of the judges that they should be deported and exposed for slaves. This menace, you may well imagine, caused great anxiety and alarm, even among those who appeared to be quite resigned to such a destiny while the gallant young Athenians were around the walls. But, to be sold! and the Gods alone know to whom! Old morose men, perhaps, and jealous women! Some⁴¹ suspect it was at the instigation of Pericles that a much severer chastisement has befallen them. They have been condemned to wear the habiliments of Persians. Surely no refinement of cruelty can surpass the decree, by which a Greek woman is divested of that beautiful dress which alone can be called an ornament to the female form. This decree has been carried into execution; and you would pity even the betrayers of their country. Whether in ignorance of what the Persian habit is, or from spite and malice, the Samian ladies are obliged to wear sleeves of sufficient amplitude to conceal a traitor in each; and chains, intersecting the forehead with their links and ornaments; and hair not divided along the whole summit of the head, but turned back about the centre, to make them resemble the heads of some poisonous snakes. Furthermore, the dresses are stripped ignominiously off the shoulders, as for some barely conceivable punishment, and fastened round the arms in such a manner that, when they attempt to reach anything, or even to move, they are constrained to shrug and writhe like the uncleanliest persons. Beside, they are quite at the mercy of any wicked

[⁴¹ First ed.: "We." These and other particulars concerning Samos are more like satire than history.]

idler in the street, who, by one slight touch, or by treading on the hem, might expose them far more undisguisedly to the gazes of the multitude.⁴² This barbarian garb has already had such an effect, that two ⁴³ have cast themselves into the sea ; and others have entreated that they may, as was first threatened, rather be sold for slaves.

CXXIII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Odious, as undoubtedly was the conduct of the Samian oligarchy and priesthood, and liable as are all excesses to a still farther exaggeration in the statement of them, you will hardly believe the effrontery of the successful demagogues. Not contented with undeniable proofs, in regard to the enormous and mismanaged wealth torn away from the priests of Bacchus, they have invented the most improbable falsehood that the malevolence of faction ever cast against the insolence of power. They pretend that certain men, some of ancient family, more of recent, had conspired to transmit the reins of government to their elder sons. Possession for life is not long enough ! They are not only to pass laws, but (whenever it so pleases) to impede them ! They decree that the first born male is to be the wisest and best of the family, and shall legislate for all Samos ! Democracy has just to go one step further, and to persuade the people (ready at such times to believe anything) that the oligarchy had resolved to render their power hereditary, not only for one generation, but for seven. The nation, so long abused in its understanding, would listen to and believe the report, ignorant that arbitrary power has never been carried to such extravagance even in Persia itself, although it is reported, that in India the lower orders of people were hereditarily subject to the domination of a privileged class. But this may be false ; and indeed it must be, if what is likewise told us concerning them be true, which is, that they have letters among them.

[⁴² The passage “ Furthermore . . . multitude ” is not in 1st ed.]

[⁴³ First ed. : “ on many that they.”]

CXXIV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

You have given me in your two last ⁴⁴ a great deal of curious information, about the discoveries that the demagogues made, or pretended to have made, in Samos. It is credible enough that the oligarchs were desirous of transmitting their authority to their children: but that they believed so implicitly in the infatuation of the citizens, or the immutability of human events, as to expect a continuation of power in the same families for seven generations, is too gross and absurd, even to mislead an insurgent and infuriated populace. He indeed must be composed of mud from the Nile, who can endure with patience this rancorous fabrication. In Egypt, we are told by Herodotus in his *Erato*, that *the son of a herald is of course a herald; and, if any man hath a louder voice than he, it goes for nothing.*

Hereditary heralds are the proper officers of hereditary law-givers; and both are well worthy of dignity where the deities are cats.

Strange oversight! that no provision should ever have been devised, to ensure in these tutelar and truly household Gods an equal security for lineal succession!

CXXV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

ABUSES of many kinds, and of great enormity, have been detected by the Samians in their overthrown government. What exasperates the people most, and indeed the most justly, is the discovery that the ruling families have grossly abused the temples, to the high displeasure of the Gods. Sacrilege has been carried to such a pitch, that some among them have appointed a relative or dependent to the service of more than one sanctuary. You remember that anciently all the worship of this island was confined to Juno. She displeased the people, I know not upon what occasion, and they suffered the greater

[⁴⁴ First ed. : "last letters."]

part of her fanes to fall in ruins, and transferred the richest of the remainder to the priests of Bacchus. Several of those, who had bent the knee before Juno, took up the thyrsus with the same devotion. The people did indeed hope that the poor and needy, and particularly such as had lost their limbs in war, or their parents or their children by shipwreck, would be succoured out of the wealth arising from the domains of the priesthood ; and the rather as these domains were bequeathed by religious men, whose whole soul rested upon Juno, and whose bequest was now utterly frustrated, by taking them from the sister of Jupiter and giving them exclusively to his son. Beside, it was recollected by the elderly, that out of these vast possessions aid was afforded to the state when the state required it ; and that, wherever there stood one of these temples, hunger and sickness, sorrow and despair, were comforted and assuaged. The people, it appears, derived no advantages from the change, and only grew more dissatisfied and violent ; for, if those who had officiated in the temples of Juno were a little more licentious than became the ministers of a Goddess, they did not run into the streets, and through the country places, drunk and armed ; nor did they seize upon the grapes, because they belonged to Bacchus ; nor upon the corn, because it is unwholesome to drink wine without bread ; nor upon the cattle, because man cannot live on bread alone. These arguments you may suspect of insufficiency : what then will you think when you hear another reason of theirs, which is, that the nation has no right to take from them what belongs to the Goddess. The people cry, *How then can it belong to you ?* Pushed upon this side, they argue that they should not be deprived of their salaries, because they are from land. What ! reply the citizens, *Are not gold and silver the products of land also ?* But long possession . . . *We will remedy that too, as well as we can.* The soldiers and sailors have the most reason to complain, when they see twelve priests in the enjoyment of more salary than seven thousand of the bravest combatants. The military are disbanded, and deprived of pay, at the instant when their services are no longer necessary ; yet no part, it appears, of a superfluous and idle priesthood is to be reduced or regulated ; on the contrary, it is rapacious and irreligious to

take away three temples from a venerable occupant of four. Was ever soldier so impudent as to complain that rations were not allowed him in four detachments of his army? The downfall of the old faction will be of little benefit to Samos, while these insults and iniquities press upon the people. Unless those who are now entrusted with power resolve to abolish the gross abuses of the priesthood, the wealth of which is greater and worse applied in Samos than it is even in those countries where the priests are sovereigns, and venerated as deities, little imports it by whom they are governed, or what Gods they venerate. It is better to be ruled by the kings of Lacedæmon, and wiser to salute in worship the sun of Persia. Never surely will the island be pacified, until what was taken from Juno shall also be taken from Bacchus, and until the richest priest be reduced in his emoluments far below the level of a polemarch.

CXXVI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

THOSE of your letters, my Cleone, which relate to the affairs of Samos, and especially to the priests of Juno and Bacchus, have led me into many reflections. The people of Athens are the most religious of any upon earth; but I doubt whether they are the most just, the most generous, the most kindly. There is not a friend, whatever benefit they may have received from him, whom they would not abandon or denounce, on a suspicion of irreverence to Pallas; and those in general are the most fanatical and furious whom, as Goddess of wisdom, she has least favoured. Your neighbours, the Samians, are more judicious in their worship of Juno. They know that, as long as Jupiter hath a morsel of ambrosia, she will share it, although he may now and then indulge in a draught of nectar to which her lips have no access. The Samians have discovered that wealth is not a requisite of worship, and that a temple needs not a thousand parasangs of land for its inclosure. If we believed that Gods could be jealous, we might fear that there would be much ill-blood between Juno and Bacchus. It is more probable that they will look on calmly, and let their priests fight it out. The Persians in these matters are not

quite so silly as we are. Herodotus tells us that, instead of altars and temples, the verdure of the earth is chosen for their sacrifice ; and music and garlands, prayers and thanksgivings, are thought as decent and acceptable as comminations and blood. It does not appear that they are less moral, or less religious, than those who have twenty Gods, and twenty temples for each. The wiser men in Athens tell us that the vulgar have their prejudices. Where indeed is the person who never has repeated this observation ? Yet believe me, Cleone, it is utterly untrue. The vulgar have not *their* prejudices : they have the prejudices of those who ought to remove them if they had any. Interested men give them, not their religion, but clubs and daggers for enforcing it ; taking from them, in return, their time, their labour, their benevolence, their understanding, and their wealth. And are such persons to be invested with the authority of lawgivers, and the splendour of satraps ? The Samians have decided that question. Priests of Bacchus, let them diffuse the liberality and joyousness, and curtail a little from the swaggering stateliness, of him whom the poet calls in his dithyrambic,

The tiger-borne and mortal-mothered God.

CXXVII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

HEPHÆSTION,⁴⁵ whom I never have mentioned to you, and whom indeed I hardly know by name, is going to Italy, and has written this poem on the eve of his departure. It is said that his verses are deficient in tenderness and amenity. Certain it is, that he by no means indulges in the display of them, whatever they may be. When Pericles had read the following, I asked him what he thought of the author. “I think, replied Pericles, “that he will never attempt to deprive me of my popularity.”

I am afraid he is an ill-tempered man : yet I hear he has suffered on many occasions, and particularly in regard to his

[⁴⁵ There can be little doubt that in describing this character Landor was thinking of himself.]

fortune, very great injustice with equally great unconcern. He is never seen in the Agora, nor in the theatre, nor in the temples, nor in any assemblage of the people, nor in any society of the learned ; nor has he taken the trouble to enter into a confederacy, or strike a bargain, as warier men do, with any praiser ; no, not even for the loan of a pair of palms in the Keramicos.⁴⁶

I have now said all I believe you will think it requisite for me to say, on a citizen so obscure and so indifferent a poet. Yet even he, poor man ! imagines that his effusions must endure. This is the most poetical thought I can find in him ; but perhaps he may have written what is better than my specimen.

THE IAMBICS OF HEPHÆSTION.

Speak not too ill of me, Athenian friends !
 Nor ye, Athenian sages, speak too ill !
 From others of all tribes am I secure,
 I leave your confines : none whom you caress,
 Finding me hungry and athirst, shall dip
 Into Cephius the grey bowl to quench
 My thirst, or break the horny bread, and scoop
 Stiffly around the scanty vase, wherewith
 To gather the hard honey at the sides,
 And give it me for having heard me sing.
 Sages and friends ! a better cause remains
 For wishing no black sail upon my mast.
 'Tis, friends and sages ! lest, when other men
 Say words a little gentler, ye repent,
 Yet be forbidden by stern pride to share
 The golden cup of kindness, pushing back
 Your seats, and grasping for a draught of scorn.
 Alas ! shall this too, never lack'd before,
 Be, when you most would crave it, out of reach !
 Thus, on the plank, now Neptune is invoked,
 I warn you of your peril : I *must* live,
 And ye, O friends ! howe'er unwilling, *may*.

CXXVIII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

ASPASIA ! I have many things to say in reply to your last letter.

[⁴⁶ For here are the monuments of all the Athenians who fell in battle by sea or land."—*Pausanias*, i. 294.]

Believe me, I can take little interest in any ill-tempered man. Hephæstion is this, you tell me, and there is nothing in his *Iambics* to make me doubt it. Neither do they contain, you justly remark, any thing so characteristic of a poet as the confidence he expresses that he shall live. All poets, good and bad, are possessed by this confidence; because the minds of them all, however feeble, however incapable, are carried to the uttermost pitch of enthusiasm. In this dream, they fancy they stand upon the same eminence, or nearly so, and look unto the same distance. But no poet, or other writer, supposing him in his senses, could ever think seriously that his works will be eternal; for whatever had a beginning must also have an end; and in this predicament are languages. Like the fowls of the air, they are driven from the plains and take refuge in the mountains, until at last they disappear, leaving some few traces, some sounds imperfectly caught up. Highly poetical works, or those in which eloquence is invested with the richest attributes of poetry, are the only ones that can prolong the existence of a dialect. Egypt and Phœnicia and Chaldæa, beyond doubt, contain many treatises on the arts and sciences, although unpublished, and preserved only by the priesthood, or by the descendants of the authors and discoverers. These are certainly to pass away before inventions and improvements more important. But if there is any thing of genius, in their hymns, fables, or histories, it will remain among them, even when their languages shall have undergone many variations: and afterward, when they are spoken no longer, it will be incorporated with others, and finally be claimed as original and indigenous by nations the most remote and dissimilar. Many streams, whose fountains are now utterly dried up, have flowed from afar to be lost in the ocean of Homer. Our early companions, the animals of good old Æsop, have spoken successively in every learned tongue. And now a few words on that gentlest and most fatherly of masters. Before we teach his fables to children, we should study them attentively⁴⁷ ourselves. They were written for the wisest and the most powerful, whose wisdom they might increase, and whose power they might direct. There are

[⁴⁷ First ed. : "very attentively."]

many men, of influence and authority, apt enough to take kindly a somewhat sharp bite from a dog or monkey, and to be indignant at the slightest touch on the shoulder from a fellow-creature. It is improbable that a fable will do many of them much good, but it may do a little to one in twenty, and the amount is by no means unimportant in that number of generations. The only use of *Æsop* to children, after the delight he gives them, is the possession of familiarity and friendship with animals, in proportion as they appear to deserve it: and a great use indeed it is. If I were not afraid that one or other of these vigilant creatures might snap at me, I would now begin to quarrel a little with you. And yet I think I should have on my side some of the more sagacious, were I to reprehend you for letting an ill-tempered man render you supercilious and unjust. How do you know, pray, that Héphæstion may not live? and quite as long as he fancies he shall; a century, or two, or three. Even in the *Iambics* there is a compression and energy of thought, which the best poets sometimes want, and there is in them as much poetry as was necessary on the occasion. The poet has given us, at one stroke, the true impression of a feature in his character; which few have done, and few can do, excepting those features⁴⁸ only which are nearly alike in the whole fraternity.

Doubtless we are pleased to take our daily walk by streams that reflect the verdure and the flowers: but the waters of a gloomy cavern may be as pellucid and pure, and more congenial to our graver thoughts and bolder imaginations.

For any high or any wide operation, a poet must be endured, not with passion indeed, but with power and mastery over it; with imagination, with reflection, with observation, and with discernment. There are however some things in poetry which admit few of these qualities. Comedy, for instance, would evaporate under too fervid a fancy: and the sounds of the Ode would be dulled and deadened by being too closely over-arched with the fruitage of reflection. Homer in himself is subject to none of the passions; but he sends them all forth on his errands with as much precision and velocity as Apollo his golden arrows. The hostile Gods, the

[⁴⁸ Not in 1st ed.]

very Fates themselves, must have wept with Priam in the tent before Achilles : Homer stands unmoved.

Aspasia ! there is every reason why a good-natured person should make us good-natured, but none whatever why an ill-natured one should make us ill-natured : neither of them ought to make us unjust. You do not know Hephaestion, and you speak ill of him on the report of others who perhaps know him as little as you do. You would shudder if I ventured to show you the position you have taken. Ill-tempered you cannot be ; you would not be unfair : what if, in the opinion of your friends, you should be a more shocking thing than either ! what, in the name of the immortal Gods ! if I should have found you, on this one occasion, a somnambulist on the verge of vulgarity !

Take courage : nobody has seen it but myself. If there are bad people in the world, and may-be there are plenty, we ought never to let it be thought that we are near enough to be aware of it.

Again to Hephaestion.

It is better to be austere than ambitious : better to live out of society than to court the worst. How many of the powerful, even within the confines of their own household, will be remembered less affectionately and lastingly than tame sparrows and talking daws ! and, among the number of those who are destined to be known hereafter, of how many will the memory be laden with contempt or with execration ! To the wealthy, proud, and arrogant, the Gods have allotted no longer an existence, than to the utensils in their kitchens or the vermin in their sewers : while, to those whom such perishables would depress and vilify, the same Eternal Beings have decreed and ratified their own calm consciousness of plastic power, of immovable superiority, with a portion (immeasurably great) of their wisdom, their authority and their duration.

CXXIX.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

We have kept your birth-day, Aspasia !

On these occasions I am reluctant to write anything.

Politeness, I think, and humanity, should always check the precipitancy of congratulation. Nobody is felicitated on losing. Even the loss of a bracelet or tiara is deemed no subject for merriment and alertness in our friends and followers. Surely then the marked and registered loss of an irreparable year, the loss of a limb of life, ought to excite far other sensations.

So long is it, O Aspasia ! since we have read any poetry together, I am quite uncertain whether you know the Ode to Asteröessa.

1.

Asteröessa ! many bring
 The vows of verse and bloom of spring
 To crown thy natal day.
 Lo, my vow too amid the rest !
 Ne'er mayst thou sigh from that white breast,
 " O take them all away ! "

2.

For there are cares and there are wrongs,
 And withering eyes and venom'd tongues ;
 They now are far behind ;
 But come they must : and every year
 Some flowers decay, some thorns appear,
 Whereof these gifts remind.

3.

Cease, raven, cease ! nor scare the dove
 With croak around and swoop above ;
 Be peace, be joy, within !
 Of all that hail this happy tide
 My verse alone be cast aside !
 Lyre ! cimbal ! dance ! begin !

Although there must be some myriads of Odes written on the same occasion, yet, among the number ⁴⁹ on which I can lay my hand, none conveys my own sentiments so completely.

Sweetest Aspasia, live on ! live on ! but rather live back the past !

[⁴⁹ First ed. : " hundred or two."]

cxxx.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

THE Hecatompedon,⁵⁰ which many of the citizens begin to call the Parthenon, is now completed, and waits but for the Goddess. A small temple, raised by Cimon in honour of Theseus, is the model. This, until lately, was the only beautiful edifice in the Athenian dominions. Pericles is resolved that Athens shall not only be the mistress, but the admiration of the world, and that her architecture shall, if possible, keep pace with her military and intellectual renown. Our countrymen, who have hitherto been better architects than the people of Attica, think it indecorous and degrading that Ionians, as the Athenians are, should follow the fashion of the Dorians, so inferior a race of mortals. Many grand designs were offered by Ictinus to the approbation and choice of the public. Those which he calls Ionian are the gracefuller. Craterus, a young architect, perhaps to ridicule the finery and extravagance of the Corinthians, exposed to view a gorgeous design of slender columns and top-heavy capitals, such as, if ever carried into execution, would be incapable of resisting the humidity of the sea-breezes or even the action of the open air, uninfluenced by them. These however would not be misplaced as indoor ornaments, particularly in bronze or ivory; and indeed small pillars of such a character would be suitable enough to highly ornamented apartments. I have conversed on the subject with Ictinus, who remarked to me that what we call the Doric column is in fact Egyptian, modified to the position and the worship; and that our noblest specimens are but reduced and petty imitations of those ancient and indestructible supporters, to the temples of Thebes, of Memphis, and Tentyra. He smiled at the ridicule cast on the Corinthians, by the name designating those florid capitals; but agreed with me that, on

[⁵⁰ In the 1st ed. this letter begins with the words "The Parthenon is now," etc. Plutarch, in the life of Pericles, says, "Ictinus built the Hecatompedon called the Parthenon," but the exact sense of the passage is uncertain, as indeed is the true relation of the Hecatompedon to the Parthenon. The Theseum was built after the Persian war by Cimon, when he brought back from Scyros the bones of the hero Theseus.—*Pausanias*, i. 17. 6.]

a smaller scale, in gold or silver, they would serve admirably for the receptacles of wax-lights on solemn festivals. He praised the designs of our Ionian architects, and acknowledged that their pillars alone deserved the appellation of Grecian, but added that, in places liable to earthquakes, inundations, or accumulations of sand, the sturdier column was in its proper situation. The architraves of the Parthenon are chiseled by the scholars of Phidias, who sometimes gave a portion of the design. It is reported that two of the figures bear the marks of the master's own hand; he leaves it to the conjecture of future ages which they are. Some of the young architects, Ionian and Athenian, who were standing with me, disputed not only on the relative merits of their architecture, but of their dialect. One of them, Psammonides of Ephesus, ill enduring the taunt of Brachys the Athenian, that the Ionian, from its open vowels, resembled a pretty pulpy hand which could not close itself, made an attack on the letter T usurping the place of S, and against the augments.

“Is it not enough,” said he, “that you lisp, but you must also stammer?”

Let us have patience if any speak against us, O Cleone! when a censure is cast on the architecture of Ictinus and on the dialect of Athens.

CXXXI.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

WHEN the weather is serene and bright, I think of the young Aspasia; of her liveliness, her playfulness, her invitations to sit down on the grass; and her challenges to run, to leap, to dance, and, if nobody was near, to gambol. The weather at this season is neither bright nor serene, and I think the more of my Aspasia, because I want her more. Fie upon me! And yet on the whole,

Happy to me has been the day,
The shortest of the year,
Though some, alas! are far away
Who made the longest yet more brief appear.

I never was formed for poetry : I hate whatever I have written, five minutes afterward. A weakly kid likes the warm milk, and likes the drawing of it from its sources ; but place the same before her, cold, in a pail, and she smells it and turns away.

Among the Tales lately come out here, many contain occasional poetry. In the preface to one, the scene of which lies mostly in Athens, the author says,

“ My reader will do well to draw his pen across the verses : they are not good for him. The olive, especially the Attic, is pleasing to few the first time it is tasted.”

This hath raised an outcry against him ; so that of the whole fraternity he is the most unpopular.

“ The Gods confound him with his Atticisms ! ” exclaim the sober-minded. “ Is not the man contented to be a true and hearty Carian ? Have we not roses and violets, lilies and amaranths, crocuses and sowthistles ? Have we not pretty girls and loving ones ; have we not desperate girls and cruel ones, as abundantly as elsewhere ? Do not folks grieve and die to his heart’s content ? We possess the staple : and, by Castor and Pollux ! we can bleach it and comb it and twist it, as cleverly as the sharpest of your light-fingered locust-eaters.”

You will soon see his works, among others more voluminous. In the meanwhile, I cannot end my letter in a pleasanter way than with a copy of these verses, which are nearer to the shortest than to the best.

I.

Perilla ! to thy fates resign’d,
Think not what years are gone,
While Atalanta¹ lookt behind
The golden fruit roll’d on.

[¹ Cf. “ Atalanta’s Race ” in the “ Earthly Paradise ” :—

“ Though slackening once, she turned her head about,
But then she cried aloud and faster fled
Than e’er before, and all men deemed him dead.
But with no sound he raised aloft his hand
And hence what seemed a ray of light there flew
And past the maid rolled on along the sand.”]

2.

Albeit a mother may have lost
 The plaything at her breast,
 Albeit the one she cherisht most
 It but endears the rest.

3

Youth, my Perilla, clings on Hope,
 And looks into the skies
 For brighter day ; she fears to cope
 With grief, she shrinks at sighs.

4.

Why should the memory of the past
 Make you and me complain?
 Come, as we could not hold it fast
 We'll play it o'er again.

CXXXII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

THERE are odes in Alcæus which the pen would stop at, trip at, or leap over. Several in our collection are wanting in yours ; this among them.

1.

Wormwood and rue be on his tongue
 And ashes on his head,
 Who chills the feast and checks the song
 With emblems of the dead !

2.

By young and jovial, wise and brave,
 Such mummers are derided,
 His sacred rites shall Bacchus have,
 Unspared and undivided.

3.

Coucht by my friends, I fear no mask
 Impending from above,
 I only fear the later flask
 That holds me from my love.

Show these to any priest of Bacchus, especially to any at Samos, and he will shake his head at you, telling you that

Bacchus will never do without his masks and mysteries, which it is holier to fear than the *later flask*. On this subject, he would prove to you, all fears are empty ones.

CXXXIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

IN ancient² nations there are grand repositories of wisdom, although it may happen that little of it is doled out to the exigencies of the people. There is more in the fables of *Æsop* than in the schools of our Athenian philosophers: there is more in the laws and usages of Persia, than in the greater part of those communities which are loud in denouncing them for barbarism. And yet there are some that shock me. We are told by Herodotus, who tells us whatever we know with certainty a step beyond our thresholds, that a boy in Persia is kept in the apartments of the women, and prohibited from seeing his father until the fifth year. The reason is, he informs us, that if he dies before this age, his loss may give the parent no uneasiness. And such a custom he thinks commendable. Herodotus has no child, Cleone! If he had, far other would be his feelings and his judgment. Before that age, how many seeds are sown, which future years, and distant³ ones, mature successively! How much fondness, how much generosity, what hosts of other virtues, courage, constancy, patriotism, spring into the father's heart from the cradle of his child! And does never the fear come over him, that what is most precious to him upon earth is left in careless or perfidious, in unsafe or unworthy hands? Does it never occur to him that he loses a son in every one of these five years? What is there so affecting to the brave and virtuous man, as that which perpetually wants his help and cannot call for it! What is so different as the speaking and the mute! And hardly less so are inarticulate sounds, and sounds which he receives half-formed, and which he delights to modulate, and which he lays with infinite care and patience, not only on the tender attentive ear, but on the half-open lips,

[² First ed.: "all nations."]

[³ First ed.: "very distant."]

and on the eyes, and on the cheeks ; as if they all were listeners. In every child there are many children ; but coming forth year after year, each somewhat like and somewhat varying. When they are grown much older, the leaves (as it were) lose their pellucid green, the branches their graceful pliancy.

Is there any man so rich in happiness that he can afford to throw aside these first five years ? is there any man who can hope for another five so exuberant in unsating joy ?

O my sweet infant ! I would teach thee to kneel before the Gods, were it only to thank 'em for being ⁴ Athenian and not Persian.

CXXXIV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

OUR good Anaxagoras said to me this morning, " You do well, Aspasia, to read history in preference to philosophy, not only on the recommendation but according to the practice of Pericles. A good historian will also be a good philosopher, but will take especial care that he be never caught in the attitude of disquisition or declamation. The golden vein must run through his field, but we must not see rising out of it the shaft and the machinery. We should moderate or repress our curiosity and fastidiousness. Perhaps at no time will there be written, by the most accurate and faithful historian, so much of truth as untruth. But actions enow will come out with sufficient prominence before the great tribunal of mankind, to exercise their judgment and regulate their proceedings. If statesmen looked attentively at every thing past, they would find infallible guides in all emergencies. But leaders are apt to shudder at the idea of being led, and little know what different things are experiment and experience. The sagacity of a Pericles himself is neither rule nor authority to those impetuous men, who would rather have rich masters than frugal friends.

" The young folks from the school of your suitor, Socrates,

[⁴ First ed. : "that thou art."]

who begin to talk already of travelling in Egypt⁵ when the plague is over, are likely to return with a distemper as incurable, breaking bulk with dæmons and dreams. They carry stem and stern too high out of the water, and are more attentive to the bustling and bellying of the streamers, than to the soundness of the mast, the compactness of the deck, or the capacity and cleanliness of the hold."

CXXXV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

ANAXAGORAS told me yesterday that he had been conversing with some literary men, philosophers and poets, who agreed in one thing only, which is, that we are growing worse day after day, both in morality and intellect. Hints were thrown out that philosophy had mistaken her road, and that it was wonderful how she could be at once so dull and so mischievous. The philosophers themselves made this complaint: the poets were as severe on poetry, and were amazed that we were reduced so low as to be the hearers of Sophocles and Euripides, and three or four more, who however were quite good enough for such admirers.

"It is strange," said Anaxagoras, "that we are unwilling to receive the higher pleasures, when they come to us and solicit us, and when we are sure they will do us great and lasting good; and that we gape and pant after the lower, when we are equally sure they will do us great and lasting evil. I am incapable," continued he, "of enjoying so much pleasure from the works of imagination as these poets are, who would rather hate Euripides and Sophocles than be delighted by them; yet who follow the shade of Orpheus with as ardent an intensity of love as Orpheus followed the shade of Eurydice. Ignorant as I am of poetry, I dared not hazard the opinion that our two contemporaries were really deserving of more commendation on the score of verse, inferior as they might in originality be to Marsyas and Thamyris and the Centaur Chiron: and to

[⁵ "When he was come to his thirty-second year, Plato went to Megara to Euclides, with others of the pupils of Socrates . . . and journeying on thence he went to visit the prophets in Egypt."—*Diogenes Laertius, Life of Plato.*]

the philosophers I could only say, My dear friends! let us keep our temper firmly, and our tenets laxly; and let any man correct both who will take the trouble.

“ I come to you, Aspasia, to console me for the derision I bring home with me.”

I kissed his brow, which was never serener, and assured him that he possessed more comfort than any mortal could bestow upon him, and that he was the only one living who never wanted any.

“ I am not insensible,” said he, “ that every year, at my time of life, we lose some pleasure; some twig, that once blossomed, cankers.”

I never was fond of looking forward: I have invariably checked both hopes and wishes. It is but fair then that I should be allowed to turn away my eyes from the prospect of age: even if I could believe that it would come to me as placidly as it has come to Anaxagoras, I would rather lie down to sleep before the knees tremble as they bend. With Anaxagoras I never converse in this manner; for old men more willingly talk of age than hear others talk of it; and neither fool nor philosopher likes to think of the time when he shall talk no longer. I told my dear old man that, having given a piece of moral to the philosophers, he must not be so unjust as to refuse a like present to the poets. About an hour before I began my letter, he came into the library, and, to my great surprise, brought me these verses, telling me that, if they were satirical, the satire fell entirely upon himself.

Pleasures! away; they please no more.
 Friends! are they what they were before?
 Loves! they are very idle things,
 The best about them are their wings.
 The dance! 'tis what the bear can do;
 Music! I hate your music too.

Whene'er these witnesses that Time
 Hath snatched the chaplet from our prime,
 Are call'd by Nature, as we go
 With eye more wary, step more slow,
 And will be heard and noted down,
 However we may fret or frown,

Shall we desire to leave the scene
Where all our former joys have been !
No, 'twere ungrateful and unwise . . .
But when die down our charities
For human weal and human woes,
Then is the time our eyes should close.

CXXXVI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

We hear that another state has been rising up gradually to power, in the centre of Italy. It was originally formed of a band of pirates from some distant country, who took possession of two eminences, fortified long before, and overlooking a wide extent of country. Under these eminences, themselves but of little elevation, are five hillocks, on which they inclosed the cattle by night. It is reported that here were the remains of an ancient and extensive city, which served the robbers for hiding-places ; and temples were not wanting in which to deprecate the vengeance of the Gods for the violences and murders they committed daily. The situation is unhealthy, which perhaps is the reason why the city was abandoned, and is likewise a sufficient one why it was rebuilt by the present occupants. They might perpetrate what depredations they pleased, confident that no force could long besiege them in a climate so pestilential. Relying on this advantage, they seized from time to time as many women as were requisite, for any fresh accession of vagabonds, rogues, and murderers.

The Sabines bore the loss tolerably well, until the Romans (so they call themselves) went beyond all bounds, and even took their cattle from the yoke. The Sabines had endured all that it became them to endure ; but the lowing of their oxen, from the seven hills, reached their hearts and inflamed them with revenge. They are a pastoral, and therefore a patient people, able to undergo the exertions and endure the privations of war, but, never having been thieves, the Romans over-matched them in vigilance, activity, and enterprise ; and have several times since made incursions into their country, and forced them to disadvantageous conditions. Emboldened

by success, they ventured to insult and exasperate the nearest of the Tyrrhenian⁶ princes.

The Tyrrhenians are a very proud and very ancient nation, and, like all nations that are proud and ancient, excel chiefly in enjoying themselves. Demaratus⁷ the Corinthian dwelt among them several years; and from the Corinthians they learned to improve their pottery, which, however, it does not appear that they ever have carried to the same perfection as the Corinthian, the best of it being indifferently⁸ copied, both in the form and in the figures on it.

Herodotus has written to Pericles all he could collect relating to them; and Pericles says the account is interesting. For my part, I could hardly listen to it, although written by Herodotus and read by Pericles. I have quite forgotten the order of events. I think they are such as neither you nor any one else, excepting those who live near them, will ever care about. But the Tyrrhenians really are an extraordinary people. They have no poets, no historians, no orators, no statuaries, no painters: they say they once had them: so much the more disgraceful. The Romans went out against them and dispersed them, although they blew many trumpets bravely, and brought (pretty nearly into action) many stout soothsayers. The enemy, it appears, has treated them with clemency: they may still feed soothsayers, blow horns, and have wives in common.

I hope it is near your bed-time: if it is, you will thank me for my letter.

CXXXVII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Who would have imagined that the grave, sedate Pericles, could take such delight in mischief! After reading my dis-

[⁶ First ed.: "Tuscan." This alteration is regularly made in the 2nd ed.]

[⁷ "Some say that the Samians, Rhœcucus and Theodorus were the first who devised the art of moulding clay long before the expulsion of the Bacchiades from Corinth, but that Demaratus, who then fled from that city, took with him to Etruria Eucheirus and Eugrammus, who were the founders of the art of pottery in Italy."—*Pliny, Hist. Nat.*]

[⁸ First ed.: "very indifferently."]

sertation on the Tyrrhenians and Romans, he gave it again into my hands, saying,

“Pray amuse your friend Cleone with your first attempt at history.”

I sent it off, quite unsuspecting. In the evening he looked at me with a smile of no short continuance, and said at last,

“Aspasia! I perceive you are emulous of our Halicarnassian; but pray do not publish that historical Essay either in his name or your own. He does not treat the Romans quite so lightly as you do, and shows rather more justice to the Tyrrhenians. You forgot to mention some important facts recorded by him, and some doubts as weighty. We shall come to them presently.

“Having heard of the Romans, but nothing distinctly, I wished to receive a clearer and a fuller account of them, and wrote to Herodotus by the first ship that sailed for Tarentum. The city where he is residing lies near it, and I gave orders that my letter should be taken thither, and delivered into his hands. Above a year is elapsed, during which time Herodotus tells me he has made all the inquiries that the pursuit of his studies would allow; that he is continuing to correct the errors, elucidate the doubtful points, and correct the style and arrangement of his history; and that, when he has completed it to his mind, he shall have time and curiosity to consider with some attention this remarkable tribe of barbarians.

“At present he has not been able to answer my questions; for never was writer so sedulous in the pursuit and examination of facts; what he sees, he describes clearly; what he hears, he relates faithfully; and he bestows the same care on the composition as he had bestowed on the investigation.

“The Romans, I imagined, had been subdued by Numa, a Sabine; for it can hardly be credited that so ferocious a community sent a friendly invitation, to be governed and commanded by the prince of a people⁹ they had grossly and repeatedly insulted. What services had he rendered them? or by what means had they become acquainted with his aptitude for government? They had ever been rude and quarrelsome: he was distinguished for civility and gentleness. They

[⁹ First ed.: “nation.”]

had violated all that is most sacred in public and private life: virgins were seized by treachery, detained by force, and compelled to wipe the blood of their fathers off the sword of their ravishers. A fratricide king had recently been murdered by a magistracy of traitors. What man in his senses would change any condition of life to become the ruler of such a nation?¹⁰ None but he who had conquered and could control them: none but one who had swords enough for every head among them. Absolute power alone can tame them, and fit them for anything better; and this power must reside in the hands of a brave and sagacious man, who will not permit it to be shared, or touched, or questioned. Under such a man, such a people may become formidable, virtuous, and great. It is too true that, to be martial, a nation must taste of blood in its cradle. Philosophers may dispute it; but time past has written it down, and time to come will confirm it. Of these matters the sophists can know nothing: he who understands them best will be the least inclined to discourse on them.

“Another thing I doubted, and wished to know. Numa is called a Sabine. The Sabines are illiterate still: in the time of Numa they were ruder; they had no commerce, no communication with countries beyond Italy; and yet there are writers who tell us that he introduced laws, on the whole not dissimilar to ours, and corrected the calendar. Is it credible? Is it possible? I am disposed to believe that both these services were rendered by the son of Demaratus,¹¹ and that the calendar might have been made better, were it not requisite on such an occasion, more than almost any other, to consult the superstition of the populace.

“I myself am afraid of touching the calendar here in Athens, many as have been my conferences with Meton on the subject. Done it shall be; but it must be either just before a victory, or just after.

“If the Sabine had sent an embassy, or even an individual,

[¹⁰ First ed.: “people.”]

[¹¹ “During the reign of Ancus, who succeeded Numa, a wealthy and energetic man came to Rome chiefly because he desired to obtain there the honours denied to him at Tarquinii, where also he was a stranger by birth. For he was the son of Demaratus the Corinthian, who, compelled to leave his home by the opposing party in that city, had settled at Tarquinii.” *Livy*, i. 34.]

to Athens, in order to collect our laws, the archives of the city would retain a record of so wonderful an event. He certainly could not have picked them up in the pastures or woodlands of his own country. But the Corinthians know them well, and have copied most of them. All nations are fond of pushing the date of their civilization as high up as possible, and care not how remotely they place the benefits they have received. And probably some of the Romans, aware that Numa was their conqueror, helped to abolish the humiliating suspicion, by investing him successively with the robes of a priest, of a legislator, and of an astronomer.

“ His two nearest successors were warriors and conquerors. The third was the son of that Demaratus of whom we have spoken, and who, exiled from Corinth, settled among the Tyrrhenians, and afterward, being rich and eloquent, won over to his interest the discontented and the venal of the Romans; at all times a great majority. We hear that he constructed, of hewn stone, a long, a spacious, and a lofty channel, to convey the filth of the town into the river: we hear, at the same time, that the town itself was fabricated of hurdles and mud, upon ruins of massy workmanship; that the best houses were roofed with rushes, and that the vases of the temples were earthen. Now, kings in general, and mostly those whose authority is recent and insecure, think rather of amusing the people by spectacles, or pampering their appetites by feasts and donatives, or dazzling their imagination by pomp and splendour. Theatres, not common sewers, suited best the Romans. Their first great exploit was performed in a theatre, at the cost of the Sabines. Moreover they were religious,¹² and stole every God and Goddess they could lay their hands on. Surely, so considerate a person as the son of Demaratus would have adapted his magnificence to the genius of the people, who never cared about filth, but were always most zealous in their devotions. This we might imagine would occur to him as more and more requisite on the capture of every town or village; for, when the Romans had killed the inhabitants, they transferred the Gods very diligently into their city, that they might not miss their worshippers. Now the Gods must have

[¹² First ed.: “ very religious.”]

wanted room by degrees, and might not have liked their quarters. Five hundred temples could have been erected at less expense than the building of this stupendous duct. Did the son of Demaratus build it then?

“ The people are still ignorant, still barbarous, still cruel, still intractable ; but they are acute in the perception of their interests, and have established at last a form of government more resembling the Carthaginian than ours. As their power does not arise from commerce, like the power of Carthage, but strikes its roots into the solid earth, its only sure foundation, it is much less subject to the gusts of fortune, and will recover from a shock more speedily. Neither is there any great nation in contact with them. When they were much weaker, the Tyrrhenians conquered them, under the command of their prince Porsena ;¹⁸ but thought they could leave them nowhere less inconveniently than in the place they themselves had abandoned. The Sabines, too, conquered them a second time, and imposed a king over them, but were so unsuspicuous and inconsiderate as not to destroy the city, and parcel out the inhabitants for Greece, Sicily, and Africa.

“ Living as they did on their farms, with no hold upon the Romans but a king, who, residing in the city with few of his own countrymen about him, was rather a hostage than a ruler, his authority was soon subverted. The Sabines at this time are partly won by conquest, and partly domiciliated by consanguinity. The Tyrrhenians are spent and effete. The government of the Romans, from royal, is now become aristocratical ; and the people, deprived of their lawful share in the lands they conquered from so many enemies, swear hatred to kings, and sigh for their return. One flagrant crime consumed the regal authority ; a thousand smouldering ones eat deep into the consular. The military system stands apart, admirable in its formation ; and unless that too falls, the Roman camps will move forward year after year, until the mountains and the seas of Italy shall not contain them. They

[¹⁸ “ In the treaty which, after the expulsion of their kings, Porsena imposed upon the Roman people, we find it expressly mentioned that the Romans are to make use of iron only for agriculturul purposes.”—*Pliny, Hist. Nat., xxxv. 39.*]

are heirs to the wealth of worn-out nations, and, when they have seized upon their inheritance, they will fight with braver. The Romans will be to Italy what the Macedonians at some future day will be to Greece.

“The old must give way to the young, nations like men, and men like leaves.”

CXXXVIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

BUILDINGS of high antiquity have usually been carried by the imagination much¹⁴ higher still. But, by what we hear of the Tyrrhenians, we may believe that in their country there are remains of earlier times, than in ours. Everything about them shows a pampered and dissolute and decaying people.

You will hardly think a sewer a subject for curiosity and investigation: yet nothing in Europe is so vast and so well-constructed as the sewer at Rome, excepting only the harbour-walls and propylaea, built recently here at Athens, under the administration of Pericles. I have asked him some further questions on the wonderful work still extant in the city occupied by the Romans. I will now give you his answer.

“Do not imagine that, unable as I am to ascertain the time when the great sewer of Rome was constructed, I am desirous of establishing one opinion in prejudice of another, or forward in denying that a rich Corinthian might have devised so vast an undertaking. But in Corinth herself we find nothing of equal magnitude, nothing at all resembling its architecture: the Tyrrhenians, who are stated to have been employed in building it, have ceased for many ages to be capable of anything similar; all their great fabrics may be dated more than a thousand years before the age of Tarquin. I feel no interest in the support of an hypothesis. Take it, or reject it; I would rather that you rejected it, if you would replace it with another and a better. Many things pass across the mind, which are neither to be detained in it with the intention of insisting on them as truths, nor are to be dismissed from it as idle and intrusive. Whatever gives exercise to our thoughts, gives them not only activity and strength, but likewise range.

[¹⁴ First ed.: “very much.”]

We are not obliged to continue on the training-ground ; nor on the other hand is it expedient to obstruct it or plough it up. The hunter, in quest of one species of game, often finds another, and always finds what is better, freshness and earnestness and animation. Were I occupied in literature, I should little fear stumbling in my ascent toward its untrodden and abstruser scenery : being a politician, I know that a single false step is a fall, and a fall is ruin. We may begin wrong, and continue so with impunity ; but we must not deviate from wrong to right."

He said this with one of his grave smiles ; and then to me,

"A slender shrub, the ornament of your private walk, may with moderate effort be drawn strait again from any obliquity ; but such an attempt, were it practicable, would crack every fibre in the twisted tree that overshades the forest."

CXXXIX.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Who told you, Aspasia, that instead of poetry,¹⁵ of history, of philosophy, our writers at Miletus are beginning to compose a species of tales, founded on love or madness and ending in miserable death or wealthy marriage ; and that, at the conclusion of the work, a strict account is rendered of all estrays, of all that had once come into it and had disappeared ? Very true, the people at large run after the detail of adventures, and are as anxious to see the termination as they are to reach the bottom of an amphora : but I beseech you never to imagine that we are reduced in our literature to such a state of desti-

[¹⁵ In the 1st ed. there is a note running as follows :—" This is an answer to a letter not extant. The Milesians are said to be the inventors of tales not always quite decorous." None of these tales have survived. They probably differed not much from the later Greek novels of which the *Egyptiaca* of Heliodorus is perhaps the most readable. Compare Mrs Browning's criticism in "Wine of Cyprus."]

" And we both loved Heliodorus
For his secret of pure lies,
Who first forged his linked stories
In the heat of ladies' eyes."]

tution, as to be without the enjoyment of those treasures which our ancestors left behind them. No, Aspasia, we are not yet so famished that a few morsels of more nutritious food would overpower us. I assure you, we do not desire to see a death or a marriage set upon the table every day. We are grateful for all the exercises and all the excursions of intellect, and our thanks are peculiarly due to those by whose genius our pleasure in them is increased or varied. If we have among us any one capable of devising an imaginary tale, wherein all that is interesting in poetry is united with all that is instructive in history, such an author will not supersede the poets and historians, but will walk between them, and be cordially hailed by both.

CXL.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

WHEN we are dull we run to music. I am sure you must be dull enough after so much of history and of politics. My Pericles can discover portents in Macedonia and Italy: Anaximander could see mountains in the moon. I desire to cast my eyes no farther than to Miletus.

Take your harp.

ODE TO MILETUS.

Maiden¹⁶ there was whom Jove
Illuded into love,
Happy and pure was she;
Glorious from her the shore became,
And Helle lifted up her name
To shine eternal o'er the river-sea.

And many tears are shed
Upon thy bridal-bed,
Star¹⁷ of the swimmer in the lonely night!

[¹⁶ Europa.]

[¹⁷ "Only do thou let some lamp upon thy tower shine out through the darkness, that seeing it, I, like love's mariner, may steer my way towards that star."—*Museus, Hero and Leander*, 210.

"But at the door she silently embraced her panting lover, his hair yet dripping with the sea-foam's dew, and leading him within, she wiped his breast and anointed him with oil sweet scented with the rose, and put away the odour of the sea."—*Ib.* 260.]

Who with unbraided hair
Wipedst a breast so fair,
Bounding with toil, more bounding with delight.

But they whose prow hath past thy straits
And, ranged before Byzantium's gates
Bring to the God of sea the victim due,
Even from the altar raise their eyes,
And drop the chalice with surprise,
And at such grandeur have forgotten you.

At last there swells the hymn of praise . . .
And who inspires those sacred lays
“The founder of the walls ye see.”
What human power could elevate
Those walls, that citadel, that gate?
“Miletus,¹⁸ O my sons! was he.”

Hail then, Miletus! hail beloved town
Parent of me and mine!
But let not power alone be thy renown
Nor chiefs of ancient line,

Nor visits of the Gods, unless
They leave their thoughts below,
And teach us that we most should bless
Those to whom most we owe.

Restless is Wealth; the nerves of Power
Sink, as a lute's in rain:
The Gods lend only for an hour
And then call back again.

All else than Wisdom; she alone,
In Truth's or Virtue's form,
Descending from the starry throne
Thro' radiance and thro' storm

Remains as long as godlike men
Afford her audience meet,
Nor Time nor War tread down again
The traces of her feet.

Always hast thou, Miletus, been the friend,
Protector, guardian, father, of the wise;
Therefore shall thy dominion never end
Till Fame, despoil'd of voice and pinion, dies.

[¹⁸ Landor seems to have found some tradition that Byzantium was a colony from Miletus. It is usually stated to be a colony from Megara.]

With favoring shouts and flowers thrown fast behind,
 Arctinus ran his race,
 No wanderer he, alone and blind . . .
 And Melesander¹⁹ was untorn by Thrace.

There have been, but not here,
 Rich men who swept aside the royal feast
 On child's or bondman's breast,
 Bidding the wise and aged disappear.

Revere the aged and the wise,
 Aspasia . . . but thy sandal is not worn
 To trample on these things of scorn . . .
 By his own sting the fire-bound scorpion dies.

CXLI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

To-day there came to visit us a writer who is not yet an author: his name is Thucydides. We understand that he has been these several years engaged in preparation for a history. Pericles invited him to meet Herodotus, when that wonderful man had returned²⁰ to our country, and was about to sail from Athens. Until then, it was believed by the intimate friends of Thucydides that he would devote his life to poetry, and such is his vigour both of thought and of expression, that he would have been the rival of Pindar. Even now he is fonder of talking on poetry than any other subject, and blushed when history was mentioned. By degrees however he warmed, and listened with deep interest to the discourse of Pericles on the duties of a historian.

“ May our first Athenian historian not be the greatest! ” said he, “ as the first of our dramatists has been, in the opinion of many. *Æschylus* was the creator of Tragedy, nor did she ever shine with such splendour, ever move with such stateliness and magnificence, as at her first apparition on the horizon. The verses of Sophocles are more elaborate, the language purer, the sentences fuller and more harmonious, but in loftiness of soul, and in the awfulness with which he invests his characters, *Æschylus* remains unrivalled and unapproached.

[¹⁹ “ Melesander the Milesian wrote of the fight between the Lapithæ and the Centaurs.”—*Ælian Var. Hist.* xi. 2.]

[²⁰ First ed.: “ was returning.”]

“We are growing too loquacious, both on the stage and off. We make disquisitions which render us only more and more dim-sighted, and excursions that only consume our stores. If some among us who have acquired celebrity by their compositions, calm, candid, contemplative men, were to undertake the history of Athens from the invasion of Xerxes, I should expect a fair and full criticism on the orations of Antiphon,²¹ and experience no disappointment at their forgetting the battle of Salamis. History, when she has lost her Muse, will lose her dignity, her occupation, her character, her name. She will wander about the Agora ; she will start, she will stop, she will look wild, she will look stupid, she will take languidly to her bosom doubts, queries, essays, dissertations, some of which ought to go before her, some to follow, and all to stand apart. The field of History should not merely be well tilled, but well peopled. None is delightful to me, or interesting, in which I find not as many illustrious names as have a right to enter it. We might as well in a drama place the actors behind the scenes, and listen to the dialogue there, as in a history push valiant men back, and protrude ourselves with husky disputation. Shew me rather how great projects were executed, great advantages gained, and great calamities averted. Shew me the generals and the statesmen who stood foremost, that I may bend to them in reverence ; tell me their names, that I may repeat them to my children. Teach me whence laws were introduced, upon what foundation laid, by what custody guarded, in what inner keep preserved. Let the books of the Treasury lie closed as religiously as the Sibyl’s ; leave weights and measures in the market-place, Commerce in the harbour, the Arts in the light they love, Philosophy in the shade : place History on her rightful throne, and at the sides of her, Eloquence and War.

“Aspasia ! try your influence over Thucydides : perhaps he would not refuse you the pleasure of hearing a few sentences of the work he has begun. I may be a plagiary if I am a listener, and yet I would request permission to be present.”

Thucydides was pleased at this deference, and has promised to return soon.

[²¹ “Cæcilius says that the orator Antiphon taught the art of style to Thucydides the Historian.”—*Photius Bibliotheca Cod.*, 259.]

CXLII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

POLYNICES, a fishmonger, has been introduced upon the stage. He had grown rich by his honesty and good-nature; and latterly, in this hot season, had distributed among the poorer families the fish he could not sell in the daytime at a reasonable price. Others of the same trade cried out against his unfairness, and he was insulted and beaten in the market-place. So favorable an incident could not escape the sagacious scent of our comic writers. He was represented on the stage as aiming at supreme power, riding upon a dolphin through a stormy sea, with a lyre in one hand, a dogfish in the other, and singing—

I, whom ye see so high on
A dolphin's back, am not Arion,
But (should the favoring breezes blow me faster)
Cecropians! by the Gods! . . . your master.

The people were very indignant at this, and demanded with loud cries the closing of the theatre, and the abolition of comedies for ever.

What the abuse of the wisest and most powerful men in the community could not effect, the abuse of a fishmonger has brought about.

The writers and actors of comedy came in a body to Pericles, telling him they had seen the madness of the people, and had heard with wonder and consternation that it was supported by some of the archons.

He answered, that he was sorry to see Comedy with a countenance so altered as to make him tremble for her approaching dissolution; her descent into the regions of Tragedy. He wondered how the Archons should deem it expedient to correct those, whose office and employment it had hitherto been to correct *them*; and regretted his inability to interpose between two conflicting authorities; he must leave it entirely to the people, who would grow calmer, and renew their gratitude to their protectors and patrons.

In the midst of these regrets the theatre for comedy was

closed. The poets and actors, as they departed, made various observations.

“Dogs sweat and despots laugh inwardly,” said Hegesias. “Did you note his malice? the Sisyphus!”

“We have nothing left for it,” said Hippoanax, “but to fall upon our knees among the scales, fins, and bladders at the fish-stall.”

“Better,” said Aristophanes, “make up to Religion, and look whether the haughty chieftain has no vulnerable place in his heel for an arrow from that quarter.”

“He has broken your bow,” said Pherecydes: “take heed that the people do not snatch at the string: they have shewn that they can pull hard, and may pull where we would not have them.”

CXLIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

THUCYDIDES has just left us. He has been reading to me a portion of history. At every pause I nodded to Pericles, who it seems to me,²² avoided to remark it purposely, but who in reality was so attentive and thoughtful that it was long before he noticed me. When the reading was over, I said to him,

“So, you two sly personages have laid your sober heads together in order to deceive me, as if I am so silly, so ignorant of peculiarity in style, as not to discover in an instant the fraud you would impose on me. Thucydides!” said I, “you have read it well; only one could have read it better . . . the author himself” . . . shaking my head at Pericles.

“O Aspasia!” said our guest, “I confess to you I was always a little too fond of praise, although I have lived in retirement to avoid it until due, wishing to receive the whole sum at once, however long I might wait for it. But never did I expect so much as this; it overturns the scale by its weight.”

“O Thucydides!” said Pericles, “I am jealous of Aspasia. No one before ever flattered her so in my presence.”

[²² First ed.: “I thought.”]

I entreated him to continue to write, and to bring down his history to the present times.

“My reverence for Herodotus,” said he, “makes me stand out of his way and look at him from a distance. I was obliged to take another model of style. I hope to continue my work beyond the present day, and to conclude it with some event which shall have exalted our glory and have established our supremacy in Greece.”

“Go on,” said I; “fear no rivals. Others are writing who fear not even Herodotus, nor greatly indeed respect him. They will be less courteous with you perhaps, whose crown is yet in the garden. The creatures run about and kick and neigh in all directions, with a gadfly on them, ever since they left the race-course at Olympia. At one moment they lay the muzzle softly and languidly and lovingly upon each other’s neck; at another they rear and bite like Python.”

“I ought to experience no enmity from them,” said he. “Before my time comes, theirs will be over.”

CXLIV.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

I AM pleased with your little note, and hope you may live to write a commentary on the same author. You speak with your usual judgment, in commending our historian for his discretion in metaphors. Not indeed that his language is without them, but they are rare, impressive, and distinct. History wants them occasionally: in oratory they are nearly as requisite as in poetry: they come opportunely wherever the object is persuasion or intimidation, and no less where delight stands foremost. In writing a letter I would neither seek nor reject one: but I think, if more than one came forward, I might decline its services. If however it had come in unawares, I would take no trouble to send it away. But we should accustom ourselves to think always with propriety, in little things as in great, and neither be too solicitous of our dress in the house, nor negligent because we are at home. I think it as improper and indecorous to write a stupid or a silly note to you, as one in a bad hand or on coarse paper.

Familiarity ought to have another and worse name, when it relaxes in its attentiveness to please.

We began with metaphors, I will end with one . . . Do not look back over the letter to see whether I have not already used my privilege of nomination, whether my one is not there. Take then a simile instead. It is a pity that they are often lamps which light nothing, and show only the nakedness of the walls they are nailed against.

CLXV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

SOPHOCLES left me about an hour ago.

Hearing that he was with Pericles on business, I sent to request he would favour me with a visit when he was disengaged. After he had taken a seat, I entreated him to pardon me, expressing a regret that we hardly ever saw him, knowing as I did that no person could so ill withstand the regrets of the ladies. I added a hope that, as much for my sake as for the sake of Pericles, he would now and then steal an hour from the Muses in our behalf.

“Lady!” said he, “it would only be changing the place of assignation.”

“I shall begin with you,” said I, “just as if I had a right to be familiar, and desire of you to explain the meaning of a chorus in *King Edipus*, which, although I have read the tragedy many times, and have never failed to be present at the representation, I do not quite comprehend.”

I took up a volume from the table . . . “No,” said I, “this is *Electra*,²³ give me the other.” We unrolled it together.

“Here it is: what is the meaning of these words about the *Laws*!”²⁴

[²³ First ed.: *Electra*, my favourite.”]

[²⁴ In Professor Jebb's translation the passage referred to runs as follows: “May destiny still find me winning the praise of reverent purity in all words and deeds sanctioned by those laws of range sublime, called into life throughout the high clear heaven whose father is Olumpos alone; their parent was no race of mortal men, no, nor shall oblivion ever lay them to sleep; a mighty god is in them and he grows not old.”—O. T. 863.]

He looked over them, first without opening his lips ; then he read them in a low voice to himself ; and then, placing the palm of his left hand against his forehead,

“ Well ! I certainly did think I understood it at the time I wrote it.”

Cleone ! if you could see him you would fall in love with him. Fifteen olympiads have not quite run away with all his youth. What a noble presence ! what an open countenance ! what a brow ! what a mouth ! what a rich harmonious voice ! what a heart, full of passion and of poetry !

CXLVI.

REPLY OF PERICLES

To the accusation of Cleon.²⁵

THERE is a race of men, (and they appear to have led colonies into many lands), whose courage is always in an inverse ratio to their danger. There is also a race who deem that a benefit done to another is an injury done to them. Would you affront them, speak well of their friends ; would you deprive them of repose, labour and watch incessantly for their country.

Cleon ! in all your experience, in all the territories you have visited, in all the cities and islands you have conquered for us, have you never met with any such people ? And yet, O generous Cleon ! I have heard it hinted that the observation is owing to you.

Were my life a private one, were my services done toward my friends alone, had my youth been exempt as yours hath been from difficulty and peril, I might never have displeased you ; I might never have been cited to defend my character against the foulest of imputations. O Athenians ! let me recall your attention to every word that Cleon has uttered. I

[²⁵ According to Plutarch the charges brought by Cleon against Pericles were connected with the ill success of an expedition led by him against Epidaurus ; “ Nor could the Athenians be satisfied until they had shown themselves masters by voting that he should be deprived of the command, and pay a fine which, by the lowest account, was fifteen talents ; some make it fifty. The person that carried on the prosecution against him was Cleon, as Idomeneus tells us.”—*Langhorne’s Plutarch, Pericles.*]

know how difficult is the task, where so much dust is blown about by so much wind. The valorous Cleon has made your ears tingle and ring with Harmodius and Aristogiton. I am ignorant which of the two he would take for imitation, the handsomer or the braver. He stalks along with great bustle and magnificence, but he shows the dagger too plainly: he neglects to carry it in myrtle.

In your astonishment at this sudden procedure, there are doubtless many of you who are unable to comprehend the very title of the denunciation. Let me then tell you what it is.

Pericles, son of Xanthippus . . . (may all Greece, hear it! may every herald in every city proclaim it at every gate!) *Pericles, son of Xanthippus is accused of embezzling the public money, collected, reserved, and set apart, for the building and decoration of the Parthenon. The accuser is Cleon, son of Cleæretus.*

The scribe has designated the father of our friend by this name, in letters very legible, otherwise I should have suspected it was the son of Cligenes, the parasite of the wealthy, the oppressor of the poor, the assailor of the virtuous, and the ridicule of all. Charges more substantial might surely be brought against me, and indeed were threatened. But never shall I repent of having, by my advice, a little decreased the revenues of the common-wealth, in lowering the price of admission to the theatres, and in offering to the more industrious citizens, out of the public treasury, the trifles requisite for this enjoyment. In the theatre, let them see before them the crimes and the calamities of Power, the vicissitudes of Fortune, and the sophistries of the Passions. Let it be there, and there only, that the just man suffers, and that murmurs are heard against the dispensations of the Gods.

But I am forgetting the accusation. Will Cleon do me the favour to inform you, in what place I have deposited, or in what manner I have spent, the money thus embezzled? Will Cleon tell you that I alone had the custody of it; or that I had anything at all to do in the making up of the accounts? Will Cleon prove to you that I am now richer than I was thirty years ago, excepting in a portion of the spoil, won bravely by the armies you decreed I should com-

mand ; such a portion as the laws allow, and the soldiers carry to their general with triumphant acclamations. Cleon has yet to learn all this ; certainly his wealth is derived from no such sources ; far other acclamations does Cleon court ; those of the idle, the dissolute, the malignant, the cowardly, and the false. But if he seeks them in Athens, and not beyond, his party is small indeed, and your indignation will drown their voices. What need have I of pilfer and peculation ? Am I avaricious ? am I prodigal ? Does the indigent citizen, does the wounded soldier, come to my door and return unsatisfied ? Point at me, Cleon ! and tell your friends to mark that. Let them mark it ; but for imitation, not for calumny. Let them hear for they are idle enough, whence I possess the means of relieving the unfortunate, raising the dejected, and placing men of worth and genius (too often in that number !) where all their fellow citizens may distinguish them. My father died in my childhood ; careful guardians superintended it, managing my affairs with honesty and diligence. The earliest of my ancestors, of whom any thing remarkable is recorded, was Cleisthenes,²⁶ whom your forefathers named general with Solon, ordering them to conquer Cirrha. He devoted his portion of the spoils to the building of a portico. I never have heard that he came by night and robbed the labourers he had paid by day : perhaps Cleon has. He won afterward at the Olympian games : I never have ascertained that he bribed his adversaries. These actions are not in history nor in tradition : but Cleon no doubt, has authorities that outvalue tradition and history. Some years afterward, Cleisthenes proclaimed his determination to give in marriage his daughter Agarista to the worthiest man he could find, whether at home or abroad. It is pity that Cleon was not living in those days. Agarista and her father, in default of him, could hear of none worthier than Megacles, son of Alcmæon. Their riches all descended to me, and some perhaps of their better

[²⁶ Cleisthenes, the ancestor of Pericles, was Tyrant of Sicyon. The Amphictyonic council appointed him with Solon to command in the war against Cirrha.—*Pausanais*, x. 37. For the story of the marriage of Agarista and the curious conduct of Hippoclides on that occasion, see *Herodotus*, vi. 126.]

possessions. These, at least, with Cleon's leave, I would retain ; and as much of the other as may be serviceable to my friends, without being dangerous to the common-wealth.

CXLVII.²⁷

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

SURELY of all our pursuits and speculations the most instructive is, how the braver pushed back their sufferings, how the weaker bowed their heads and asked for sympathy. How the soldier smote his breast at the fallacies of glory, and how the philosopher paused and trembled at the depths of his discoveries. But the acquirement of such instruction presses us down to the earth. We see the basest and most inert of mankind the tormentors and consumers of the loftiest ; the worm at last devours what the lion and tiger paused at and fled from. But Pericles for the present is safe and secure ; and I am too happy for other thoughts or reflections. Anaxagoras also is only doubted : he may disbelieve in some mysteries, but he is surely too wise a man to divulge it.

CXLVIII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Now we are quiet and at peace again, I wish you would look into your library for more pieces of poetry. To give you some provocation, I will transcribe a few lines on the old subject, which, like old fountains, is inexhaustible, while those of later discovery are in danger of being cut off at the first turn of the plough.

ERINNA TO LOVE.

I.

Who breathes to thee the holiest prayer,
O Love ! is ever least thy care.
Alas ! I may not ask thee why 'tis so . . .
Because a fiery scroll I see
Hung at the throne of Destiny.
Reason with Love and register with Woe.

[²⁷ Not in 1st ed.]

2.

Few question thee, for thou art strong
 And, laughing loud at right and wrong,
 Seizest, and dashest down, the rich, the poor ; -
 Thy sceptre's iron studs alike
 The meaner and the prouder strike,
 And wise and simple fear thee and adore.

CXLIX.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

AMONG the poems of Sappho I find the following, but written in a different hand from the rest. It pleases me at least as much as any of them ; if it is worse, I wish you would tell me in what it is so. How many thoughts might she have turned over and tossed away for it ! ²⁸ Odious is the economy in preserving all the scraps of the intellect, and troublesome the idleness of tacking them together. Sappho is fond of seizing, as she runs on, the most prominent and inviting flowers : she never stops to cut and trim them : she throws twenty aside for one that she fixes in her bosom ; and what is more singular, her pleasure at their beauty seems never to arise from another's admiration of it. See it or not see it, there it is.

Sweet girls ! upon whose breast that God descends
 Whom first ye pray to come and next to spare,
 O tell me whither now his course he bends,
 Tell me what hymns shall thither waft my prayer !
 Alas ! my voice and lyre alike he flies,
 And only in my dreams, nor kindly then, replies.

CL.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

INSTEAD of expatiating on the merits of the verses you last sent me, or, on the other hand, of looking for any pleasure in taking them to pieces, I venture to hope you will be of my opinion, that these others are of equal authenticity. Neither do I remember them in the copy you possessed when we were together.

[²⁸ "for it" not in 1st ed.]

SAPPHO TO HESPERUS.

I.

I have beheld thee in the morning hour
 A solitary star, with thankless eyes,
 Ungrateful as I am! who bade thee rise
 When sleep all night had wandered from my bower.

2.

Can it be true that thou art he
 Who shinest now above the sea
 Amid a thousand, but more bright?
 Ah 'yes, the very same art thou
 That heard me then, and hearest now . . .
 Thou seemest, star of love, to throb with light.

Sappho is not the only poetess who has poured forth her melodies to Hesperus, or who had reason to thank him. I much prefer these of her's to what appear to have been written by some confident man, and (no doubt) on a feigned occasion.

I.

Hesperus, hail! thy winking light
 Best befriends the lover,
 Whom the sadder Moon for spite
 Gladly would discover.

2.

Thou art fairer far than she,
 Fairer far, and chaster:
 She may guess who smiled on me,
 I know who embraced her.

3.

Pan of Arcady . . . 'twas Pan,
 In the tamarisk-bushes . . .
 Bid her tell thee, if she can,
 Where were then her blushes.

4

And, were I inclined to tattle,
 I could name a second,
 Whom asleep with sleeping cattle
 To her cave she beckon'd.

5.

Hesperus, hail ! thy friendly ray
 Watches o'er the lover,
 Lest the nodding leaves betray,
 Lest the Moon discover.

6.

Phryne heard my kisses given
 Acte's rival bosom . . .
'Twas the buds, I swore by heaven,
Bursting into blossom.

7.

What she heard and half espied
 By the gleam, she doubted,
 And with arms uplifted, cried,
How they must have sprouted!

8.

Hesperus, hail again ! thy light
 Best befriends the lover,
 Whom the sadder Moon for spite
 Gladly would discover.

The old poets are contented with narrow couches : but these couches are not stuffed with chaff which lasts only for one season. They do not talk to us from them when they are half-asleep ; but think it more amusing to entertain us in our short visit with lively thoughts and fancies, than to enrich us with a paternal prolixity of studied and stored-up meditations.

CL. 20

PERICLES TO ALCIBIADES.

My Alcibiades, if I did not know your good temper from a whole life's experience, I should be afraid of displeasing you by repeating what I have heard. This is that you pronounce, in public as well as in private, a few words somewhat differently from our custom. You cannot be aware how much hostility you may excite against you by such a practice.

[²⁰ Not in 1st ed. With this letter compare Lord Chesterfield's letter to his son on the same subject.]

Remember, we are Athenians ; and do not let us believe that we have finer organs, quicker perceptions, or more discrimination, than our neighbours in the city. Every time we pronounce a word differently from another, we show our disapprobation of his manner, and accuse him of rusticity. In all common things we must do as others do. It is more barbarous to undermine the stability of a language than of an edifice that hath stood as long. This is done by the introduction of changes. Write as others do, but only as the best of others : and if one eloquent man, forty or fifty years ago, spoke and wrote differently from the generality of the present, follow him, though alone, rather than the many. But in pronunciation we are not indulged in this latitude of choice ; we must pronounce as those do who favour us with their audience. Never hazard a new expression in public : I know not any liberty we can take, even with our nearest friends, more liable to the censure of vanity. Whatever we do we must do from authority or from analogy. A young man, however studious and intelligent, can know, intrinsically and profoundly, but little of the writers who constitute authority. For my part, in this our country, where letters are far more advanced than in any other, I can name no one whatever who has followed up to their origin the derivation of words, or studied with much success their analogy. I do not, I confess, use all the words that others do, but I never use one that others do not. Remember, one great writer may have employed a word which a greater has avoided, or, not having avoided it, may have employed in a somewhat different signification. It would be needless to offer you these remarks, if our language were subject to the capriciousness of courts, the humiliation of sycophants, and the defilement of slaves. Another may suffer but little detriment by the admission of barbarism to its franchises ; but ours is attic, and the words, like the citizens we employ, should at once be popular and select.

CLII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

THE poetical merits of the unhappy Lesbian are sufficiently well known. Thanks, and more than thanks, if indeed there

is any thing more on earth, are due for even one scrap from her. But allow me, what is no great delicacy or delight to me, a reprobation, a censure. An admirer can make room for it only when it comes from an admirer. Sappho, in the most celebrated of her Odes, tells us that she sweats profusely. Now, surely no female, however low-born and ill-bred, in short, however Eolian, could without indecorousness speak of sweating and spitting, or any such things. We never ought to utter, in relation to ourselves, what we should be ashamed of being seen in. Writing of war and contention, such an expression is unobjectionable. To avoid it by circumlocution, or by any⁸⁰ other word less expressive and direct, would be the most contemptible and ludicrous of pedantry: and, were it anywhere reduced to practice in the conversation of ordinary life, it would manifestly designate a coarse-grained unpolishable people. There is nothing in poetry, or indeed in society, so unpleasant as affectation. In poetry it arises from a deficiency of power and a restlessness of pretension; in conversation, from insensibility to the Graces, from an intercourse with bad company, and a misinterpretation of better.

CLIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

You desire to know what portion of history it is the intention of Thucydides to undertake. He began with the earlier settlers of Greece, but he has now resolved to employ this section as merely the portico to his edifice. The Peloponnesian war appears to him worthier of the historian than any other. He is of opinion that it must continue for many years and comprehend many important events, for Pericles is resolved to wear out the energy of the Spartans by protracting it. At present it has been carried on but few months, with little advantage to either side, and much distress to both. What our historian has read to us does not contain any part of these transactions, which however he carefully notes down as they occur. We were much amused by a speech he selected for recitation, as one delivered by an orator of the Corinthians to

[⁸⁰ First ed.: "another."]

the Ephors of Lacedæmon, urging the justice and necessity of hostilities. Never was the Athenian character painted in such true and lively colours. In composition his characteristic is brevity, yet the first sentence of the volume runs into superfluity. The words, to the best of my recollection, are these.

“Thucydides of Athens has composed a history of the war between the Peloponnesians and Athenians.”

This is enough ; yet he adds,

“As conducted by each of the belligerents.”

Of course : it could not be conducted by one only.

I observed that in the fourth sentence he went from the third person to the first.

By what I could collect, he thinks the Peloponnesian war more momentous than the Persian : yet, had Xerxes prevailed against us, not a vestige would be existing of liberty or civilisation in the world. If Sparta should, there will be little enough, and a road will be thrown open to the barbarians of the north, Macedonians and others with strange names. We have no great reason to fear it, although the policy of Thebes, on whom much depends, is ungenerous and unwise.

He said moreover, that “transactions of an earlier time are known imperfectly, and were of small importance either in the wars or any thing else.”

Yet without these wars, or some other of these transactions, our Miletus and Athens, our Pericles and Thucydides, would not be ; so much does one thing depend upon another. I am little disposed to over-value the potency and importance of the eastern monarchies ; but surely there is enough to excite our curiosity, and interest our inquiries, in the fall of Chaldæa, the rise of Babylon, and the mysteries of Egypt . . . not indeed her mysteries in theology, which are impostures there as elsewhere, but the mysteries in arts and sciences, which will outlive the Gods. Barbarians do not hold steadily before us any moral or political lesson ; but they serve as graven images, protuberantly eminent and gorgeously uncouth, to support the lamp placed on them by History and Philosophy. If we knew only what they said and did, we should turn away with horror and disgust : but we pound their mummies to colour

our narratives; and we make them as useful in history as beasts are in fable.

Thucydides shews evidently, by his preliminary observations, that he considers the Trojan war unimportant. Yet, according to Homer, the Grecian troops amounted to above a hundred thousand. In reality, so large a force hath never been assembled in any naval expedition, nor even one half. How was it provisioned at Aulis? how, on the shores of the Troad? And all these soldiers, with chariots and horses, were embarked for Troy, a few years after the first ship of war left the shores of Greece! yes, a very few years indeed; for the Argo had among her crew the brothers of Helen, who cannot well be supposed to have been five⁸¹ years older than herself. It is of rare occurrence, even in the climate of Sparta, that a mother bears children after so long an interval; and we have no reason to believe that such a time had elapsed between the brothers and their sister. Suppose the twins to have been twenty-two years old (for they had become celebrated for horsemanship and boxing) and Helen seventeen,⁸² you will find little space left between the expeditions.

But away with calculation. We make a bad bargain when we change poetry for truth in the affairs of ancient times, and by no means a good one in any.

Remarkable men of remote ages are collected together out of different countries within the same period, and perform simultaneously the same action. On an accumulation of obscure deeds arises a wild spirit of poetry; and images and names burst forth and spread themselves, which carry with them something like enchantment far beyond the infancy of nations. What was vague imagination settles, at last, and is received for history. It is difficult to effect and idle to attempt the separation: it is like breaking off a beautiful crystallization from the vault of some intricate and twilight cavern, out of mere curiosity to see where the accretion terminates and the rock begins.

[⁸¹ First ed.: "ten."]

[⁸² In the 1st ed. the words "for her daughter was an infant (and such beauty must have been sought early in marriage)" follow here.]

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

We have lost another poet, and have none left, beside the comic. Euripides⁸⁸ is gone to the court of Archelaus. A few years ago he gained the prize against all competitors. He was hailed by the people as a deliverer, for subverting the ascendancy and dominion which Sophocles had acquired over them. The Athenians do not like to trust any man with power for life. Sophocles is now an old man, sixty years of age at the least, and he had then been absolute in the theatre for above a quarter of a century. What enthusiasm! what acclamations! for overthrowing the despot who had so often made them weep and beat their breasts. He came to visit us on the day of his defeat: Euripides was with us at the time.

“Euripides,” said he, “we are here alone, excepting our friends Aspasia and Pericles. I must embrace you, now it cannot seem an act of ostentation.”

He did so, and most cordially.

“I should be glad to have conquered you,” continued he; “it would have been very glorious.”

I never saw Pericles more moved. These are the actions that shake his whole frame, and make his eyes glisten. Euripides was less affected. He writes tenderly, but is not tender. There are hearts that call for imagination; there are others that create it.

I must abstain from all reflections that fall too darkly on the departed. We may see him no more perhaps: I am sorry for it. He did not come often to visit us, nor indeed is there any thing in his conversation to delight or interest me. He has not the fine manners of Sophocles, nor the open unreserved air, which Pericles tells me he admired so much in the soldierly and somewhat proud *Æschylus*; grave and taciturn, I hear, like himself, unless when something pleased him; and

[⁸⁸ The departure of Euripides from Athens was probably connected with the departure of Anaxagoras. He was, according to many authorities, a disciple of that philosopher, and was, like him, suspected of holding unorthodox opinions. It is far more likely that he left Athens to avoid a prosecution for impiety than that he was running away from his wife.]

then giving way to ebullitions and bursts of rapture, and filling every one with it round about.

The movers and masters of our souls have surely a right to throw out their limbs as carelessly as they please, on the world that belongs to them, and before the creatures they have animated. It is only such insects as petty autocrats, that feel oppressed by it, and would sting them for it. Pericles is made of the same clay. He cannot quite overcome his stateliness, but he bends the more gracefully for bending slowly.

When I think of Euripides, I think how short a time it is since he was hailed as a deliverer: and how odious he is become, for breaking in upon our affections at an unseasonable hour, and for carrying our hearts into captivity. All the writers of the day were resolved to humble him, and ran about from magistrate to magistrate, to raise money enough for the magnificent representation of his rival . . . I have forgotten the man's name. Pericles never thwarts the passions and prejudices of the citizens. In his adolescence he visited the humble habitation of the venerable *Æschylus*: throughout life he has been the friend of Sophocles: he has comforted Euripides in his defeats, telling him that by degrees he would teach the people to be better judges: he rejoiced with him on his first victory, reminding him of his prophecy, and remarking that they two, of all the Athenians, had shown the most patience and had been the best rewarded for it.

We hope he may return.

CLV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

THE two pieces I am about to transcribe are of styles very different. I find them among the collections of Pericles, but am ignorant of the authors.

Far from the harp's and from the singer's noise,
The bird of Pallas lights on ruin'd towers.
I know a wing that flaps o'er girls and boys
To harp and song, and kiss in myrtle bowers;
When ages come, I too will sit apart,
While age is absent, that shall fan my heart.

CUPID AND LIGEIA.

Cupid had played some wicked trick one day
 On sharp Ligeia ; and I heard her say,
 " You little rogue ! you ought to be unsexed."
 He was as spiteful, though not quite so vexed,
 And said (but held half-shut the folding doors)
 " Ah then, my beard will never grow like yours ! "

CLVI.

FIRST SPEECH OF PERICLES TO THE ATHENIANS,

On the Declaration of Corinth and Lacedemon.

THE Regency of Lacedæmon has resolved to make an irruption into Attica, if we attempt any thing adverse to Potidæa, hearing that on the declaration of hostilities by Corinth, we ordered the Potidæans, whose infidelity we had detected, to demolish the wall facing Pallene. In reliance on their treason, Perdiccas and the Corinthians had entered into confederacy, and were exciting the defection of our Thracian auxiliaries. Perdiccas prevailed with the Chalcidians to dismantle all their towns upon the seaside, and to congregate in Olynthus. We made a truce, and afterward a treaty, with Perdiccas : he evacuates the territory he invaded ; we strictly beleaguer the revolted Potidæa. The ephore of Lacedæmon now summon to appear before them not only their allies, but whosoever has any complaint to prefer against the Athenians. Hereupon the Megaræans come forward, and protest that they have been prohibited from our markets, contrary to treaty ; and what is worse, that we exclude them from the possession of Potidæa, so convenient for extending their power and authority into Thrace. They appear, in their long oration, to have forgotten nothing, unless that they had murdered our citizens and ambassadors.

By what right, O Athenians, is Lacedæmon our judge ? Corinth may impel her into war against us ; but Corinth can never place her on the judgment-seat of Greece ; nor shall their united voices make us answer to the citation. We will declare not to her but to all, our reasons and our rights. The Corcyreans had erected a trophy at Leucimna, and had spared after the victory their Corinthian captives : they had laid

waste the territory of Leucas and they had burnt the arsenal of Cyllene. Meanwhile the Corinthians sent ambassadors to every power in the Peloponese, and enlisted mariners for their service upon every coast. If valour and skill and constancy could have availed the Corcyreans, they would have continued to abstain, as they had ever done, from all alliances. They only sought ours when destruction was imminent ; knowing that, in policy and humanity, we never could allow the extinction of one Grecian state, nor consequently the aggrandisement and preponderance of another ; and least so when the insolence of Corinth had threatened our naval ascendency (by which all Greece was saved), and the rivalry of Lacedæmon our equality on land. By our treaty with the Lacedæmonians it is provided that, if any community be not in alliance with one of the parties, it may confederate with either, at its discretion ; and this compact it was agreed should be binding not only on the principals but likewise on the subordinates. In such a predicament stands Corcyra.

It might behove us to chastise the inhumanity of a nation which, like Corinth, would devour her own offspring ; but it certainly is most just and most expedient, when, instead of reasoning or conferring with us on the propriety of our interference, she runs at once to Sparta, conspiring with her to our degradation, and, if possible, to our ruin. Satisfactorily to demonstrate our justice and moderation, I advise that we stipulate with Corcyra for mutual defence, never for aggression, and admitting no article which, even by a forced interpretation, may contravene our treaty with Lacedæmon.

CLVII.

SECOND SPEECH OF PERICLES.

THE jealousy that Sparta hath ever entertained against us, was declared most flagrantly, when Leotychides, who commanded the Grecian forces at Mycale, drew away with him all the confederates of the Peloponese. We continued to assail the barbarians until we drove them from Sestos, their last hold upon the Hellespont. It was then, and then only, that the Athenians brought back again from miserable refuge their

wives and children, and began to rebuild their habitations, and walls for their defence. Did the Spartans view this constancy and perseverance with admiration and with pity, as the patriotic, the generous, the humane, would do? Did they send ambassadors to congratulate your fathers on their valour, their endurance, their prosperous return, their ultimate security? Ambassadors they sent, indeed, but insisting that our walls should never rise again from their ruins. A proposal so unjust and arrogant we treated with scorn and indignation, when our numbers were diminished and our wealth exhausted; shall we bend to their decisions and obey their orders now? If their power of injuring us were in proportion to their malice, their valour to their pride, or their judgment to their ferocity, then were they most formidable indeed: but we turn to the examination of facts. Having occasion to reduce to obedience a few revolted Helotes in the city of Ithome, to whom did they apply? to the Athenians; for they themselves were utterly ignorant how to attack or even to approach a fortress. Even then they showed their jealousy, rewarding our promptitude to assist them by the ignominious dismissal of our troops. What was the consequence? a ten years' siege. And these, O Athenians! are the men who now threaten the Acropolis and Piræus!

I can compare the Lacedæmonians to nothing more fitly than to the heads of spears without the shafts. There would be abundantly the power of doing mischief, were there only the means and method of directing it. Where these are wanting, we have no better cause for apprehension than at the sparks of fire under our horse's hoof, lest they produce a conflagration; which indeed they might do, if by their nature they were durable and directable.

Let us see what powerful aid our enemies are expecting; what confederates they are stirring up against us. The Megaræans, who left their alliance for ours; the Megaræans, whom we defended against the Corinthians, and whose walls we constructed at our own expense from Megara to Nisæa. Is it on the constancy or on the gratitude of this people that Lacedæmon in her wisdom so confidently relies? No sooner had we landed in Eubœa, than intelligence was brought us

that the Peloponnesians were about to make an incursion into Attica, and that the Athenian garrison was murdered by the Megaræans, who already had formed a junction with the Corinthians, Sicyonians, and Epidaurians. We sailed homeward, and discomfited the Peloponnesians; returned and reduced Eubœa. A truce for thirty years was granted to Lacedæmon, restoring to her Niæa, Calchis, Pegæ, and Trazene. Five years afterward a war broke out between the Samians and Miletus. Justice and our treaties obliged us to rescue that faithful and unfortunate city from the two-fold calamity that impended over her. Many of the Samians were as earnest in imploring our assistance as the Milesians were: for, whatever might be the event of the war, they were sure of being reduced to subjection; if conquered, by a wronged and exasperated enemy; if conquerors, by the king. A rapacious and insolent oligarchy saw no other means of retaining its usurped authority, than by extending it with rigour, and were conscious that it must fall from under them unless the sceptre propped it. Honest men will never seek such aid, and free men will never endure such.

There may be nations, monarchical and aristocratical, where the public good is little thought of, and often impeded by restless steps toward personal or family aggrandisement. But there is no man, even among these, so barbarous and inhuman, as to be indifferent to the approbation of some one in his city, beloved above all the rest, from whom the happy rush forward for admiration, the less fortunate are gratified with a tear: life, they would tell us, is well lost for either. We Athenians have loftier views, and, I will not say purer, but the same and more ardent aspirations.

In the late brief war, the greater part of you here present have won immortal glory: and let us not believe that those who fell from your ranks in battle are yet insensible to the admiration and the gratitude of their countrymen. No one among us, whatever services he may have rendered to Athens, has received such praises, such benedictions, such imperishable rewards, as they have. Happy men! they are beyond the reach of calumny and reverses. There is only one sad reflection resting with them: they can serve their country no more.

How high was the value of their lives! they knew it, and bartered them for renown. We, in this war unjustly waged against us, shall be exposed to fewer dangers, but more privations. In the endurance of these, our manliness will be put severely to the proof, and virtues which have not been called forth in fifty years, virtues which our enemies seem to have forgotten that we possess, must again come into action, as if under the eyes of a Themistocles and an Aristides. We have all done much; but we have all done less than we can do, ought to do, and will do.

Archidamus, king of Sparta, now about to march against us, is bound to me by the laws of hospitality. Should he, whether in remembrance of these, or in the design of rendering me suspected, abstain from inflicting on my possessions the violence he is about to inflict on the rest of Attica, let it be understood that henceforth I have no private property in this land, but, in the presence of the Gods, make a free donation of it to the commonwealth. Let all withdraw their cattle, corn, and other effects, from the country, and hold Athens as one great citadel, from which the Deity, who presides over her, hath forbidden us to descend.

CLVIII.

ORATION OF PERICLES,

On the approach of the Lacedæmonians to Athens.

LONG ago, and lately, and in every age intervening, O Athenians! have you experienced the jealousy and insolence of Lacedæmon. She listens now to the complaints of Corinth, because the people of Corcyra will endure no longer her vexations, and because their navy, in which the greater part of the mariners have fought and conquered by the side of ours, seek refuge in the Piræus. A little while ago she dared to insist that we should admit the ships of Megara to our harbour, her merchandise to our markets, when Megara had broken her faith with us, and gone over to the Spartans. Even this indignity we might perhaps have endured. We told the Lacedæmonians that we would admit the Megaræans to that

privilege, if the ports of Sparta would admit us and our allies : although we and our allies were never in such relationship with her, and therefore could never have fallen off from her. She disdained to listen to a proposal so reasonable, to a concession so little to be expected from us. Resolved to prove to her that generosity, and not fear, dictated it, we chastised the perfidious Megara.

The king of the Lacedæmonians, Archidamus, a wiser and honester man than any of his people, is forced to obey the passions he would control ; and an army of sixty thousand men is marching under his command to ravage Attica. The braver will rather burn their harvests than transfer to a sanguinary and insatiable enemy the means of inflicting evil on their relatives and friends. Few, I trust, are base enough, sacrilegious enough, to treat as guests, those whom you, before men and Gods, denounce as enemies. We will receive within our walls the firm and faithful. And now let the orators who have blamed our expenditure in the fortification of the city, tell us again that it was improvident. They would be flying in dismay had not those bulwarks been raised effectually. Did it require any sagacity to foresee that Athens would be the envy of every state around ? Was there any man so ignorant as not to know that he who has lost all his enemies will soon lose all his energy ? and that men are no more men when they cease to act, than rivers are rivers when they cease to run ? The forces of our assailants must be broken against our walls. Our fleets are our farms henceforward, until the Spartans find that, if they can subsist on little, they cannot so well subsist on stones and ashes. Their forces are vast ; but vast forces have never much hurt us. Marathon and Platæa were scarcely wide enough for our trophies : a victorious army, an unvanquished fleet, Miltiades himself, retired unsuccessful from the rock of Paros. Shall we tremble then before a tumultuous multitude, ignorant how cities are defended or assailed ? Shall we prevent them from coming to their discomfiture and destruction ? Firmly do I believe that the Protectress of our city leads them against it to avenge her cause. They may ravage the lands ; they cannot cultivate, they cannot hold them. Mischief they will do, and great ; much of our time, much of our patience,

much of our perseverance, and something of our courage, are required. At present I do not number this event among our happiest. We must owe our glory partly to ourselves and partly to our enemies. They offer us the means of greatness ; let us accept their offer. Brief danger is the price of long security. The countryman, from the mists of the morning, not only foretells the brightness of the day, but discerns in them sources of fertility ; and he remembers in his supplications to the immortal Gods to thank them alike for both blessings. It is thus, O men of Athens, that you have constantly looked up to calamities. Never have they depressed you : always have they chastened your hearts, always have they exalted your courage. Impelled by the breath of Xerxes, the locusts of Asia consumed your harvests : your habitations crumbled away as they swarmed along : the temples of the Gods lay prostrate : the Gods themselves bowed and fell : the men of Athens rose higher than ever. They had turned their faces in grief from the scene of devastation and impiety ; but they listened to a provident valour, and the myriads of insects that had plagued them were consumed.

There is affront in exhortation . . . I have spoken.

CLIX.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

ON the shore overlooking the fountain of Arethusa there is a statue of Æschylus. An Athenian who went to visit it, crowned it with bay and ivy, and wrote these verses at the base.

Stranger ! Athenian hands adorn
A bard thou knowest well.
Ah ! do not ask where he was born,
For we must blush to tell.

Proud are we, but we place no pride
On good, or wise, or brave ;
Hence what Cephisus had denied
T'was Arethusa gave.

You remember the story of a barbarous king, who would have kept the Muses in captivity. His armoury furnished an enemy of the poet Lysis with these materials for skirmishing.

TO LYSIS.

A curse upon the king of old
 Who would have kidnaped all the Muses !
 Whether to barter them for gold
 Or keep them for his proper uses.

Lysis ! aware he meant them ill,
 Birds they became, and flew away . . .
 Thy Muse alone continues still
 A titmouse to this very day.³⁴

Do not call me sly and perfidious, if, after tickling you with this feather, I have not only permitted a wicked thought to enter my head, but have also devised a place for it, if possible, in yours. The lines below are none of my composition, as you may well imagine from my character.

There is in kisses a delight ;
 A fragrance of the wine
 Quaff by the happier in the genial night
 Is there ; may these be mine !

What said I ? empty kisses ? none are empty.
 Gods all the just who give
 Thy graceful feast from every grief exempt ye !
 Blest, honour'd, grant they live !

And now I have written them fairly out, I am afraid of sending them : for I remember that if ever I uttered such a word as kiss, you wondered at me. Really and truly it was as far from wonder as anything could be, and so it will be now ; but it was very near a slight displeasure, which now it must not be.

CLX.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

AFTER an interval of nearly three years, Comedy may re-appear on the stage. It is reported that Pericles obtained this indulgence from the archons ; and in consequence of it, he is

[³⁴ In 1st ed. this letter ends here.]

now represented by the dramatists as a Jupiter,⁸⁵ who lightens and thunders, and what not. Before he became a Jupiter, I believe he was represented as the enemy of that God, and most of the others; and the people, having no public amusement, no diversion to carry off their ill-humours, listened gloomily to such discourses. Pericles noted it, and turned them into their fold again, and had them piped to; but not before the fly entered the fleece.

CLXI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

TWENTY days, O Cleone, twenty days are not elapsed, since Anaxagoras told me that he was about to leave Attica for the Propontis. I urged him to alter his resolution. He affirmed that his presence in the house of Pericles had brought a cloud over it, which would only disappear by his absence. "Of late," said he, "I have received so much kindness from the philosophers, that I begin to suspect a change of fortune, by no means in my favour. I must fly while the weather is temperate, as the swallows do."

He mixes not with the people, he converses with none of them, and yet he appears to have penetrated into the deepest and darkest recesses of their souls.

Pericles has lost their favour; Anaxagoras is banished; Aspasia . . . but what is Aspasia? Yours; and therefore you must hear about her.

We have all been accused of impiety; Anaxagoras and myself have been brought to trial for the offence. Diopitheis is the name of our accuser. He began with Anaxagoras; and having proved by three witnesses that he in their hearing had declared his opinion, that lightning and thunder were the effect of some combustion and concussion in the clouds, and that they often happened when Jupiter was in perfectly good humour, not thinking at all about the Athenians, there was

[⁸⁵ " For Pericles, like an Olympian Jove,
With all his thunder and his thunderbolts,
Began to storm and lighten dreadfully,
Alarming all the neighbourhood of Greece."
—Frere's *Aristophanes. The Archarnians*, 650.]

instantly such a rage and consternation in the whole assembly, that the judges were called upon from every quarter to condemn him for impiety ; sentence, death.

Pericles rose. He for the first time in his life was silenced by the clamorous indignation of the people. All parties, all classes, men, women, children, priests, sailors, tavern-keepers, diviners, slave-merchants, threatened, raged,³⁶ foamed.

"Pericles ! you yourself will soon be cited before this august tribunal," said Diopeithes. The clamour now began to subside. Curiosity, wonder, apprehension of consequences, divided the assembly ; and when Pericles lifted up his arm, the agitation, the murmurs, and the whispers, ceased.

"O men of Athens !" said he calmly, "I wish it had pleased the Gods that the vengeance of Diopeithes had taken its first aim against me, whom you have heard so often, known so long, and trusted so implicitly. But Diopeithes hath skulked from his ambush and seized upon the unsuspecting Anaxagoras, in the hope that, few knowing him, few can love him. The calculation of Diopeithes is correct : they who love him are but those few. They however who esteem and reverence him can only be numbered by him who possesses a register of all the wise and all the virtuous men in Greece."

Anaxagoras stepped forward, saying,

"You, O Athenians ! want defenders, and will want them more : I look for protection to no mortal arm ; I look for it to that divine power, the existence of which my accuser tells you I deny."

"He shirks the thunder," said one.

"He sticks to the blind side of Jupiter," said another.

Such were the observations of the pious and malicious, who thought to expiate all their sins by throwing them on his shoulders, and driving him out of the city. He was condemned by a majority of voices. Pericles followed him through the gates, beyond the fury of his persecutors.

[³⁶ First ed. : "raved."]

CLXII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

THREE days after the banishment of Anaxagoras, the threat of Diopeithes was carried into effect ; not against the person of Pericles, but against your Aspasia. Diopeithes had himself denounced me on the same count as Anaxagoras : and Hermippus, whose entire life has been (they tell me) one sluggish stream of gross impurities, impeached me as a corruptress of the public morals.

You will imagine, my Cleone, that something loose and lascivious was brought forward in accusation against me. No such thing. Nothing of the kind is considered as having any concern with public morals here in Athens. My crime was, seducing young men from their parents and friends ; retaining them in conversation at our house ; encouraging them to study the sciences in preference to the machinations of Sophists ; to leave the declaimers an empty room for the benefit of their voices, and to adhere more closely to logic before they venture upon rhetoric.

You will now perceive, that all who have the most interest and the most exercise in the various artifices of deception, were my enemies. I feared lest Pericles should run farther into the danger of losing his popularity, by undertaking my defence, and resolved to be my own pleader. The hour had been appointed for opening the trial : I told him it was one hour later. When it was nearly at hand, I went out of the house unobserved, and took my place before the assembly of the people. My words were these.

“ If any of the accusations brought against me were well-founded, they would have been known to Pericles. It would be strange were he indifferent to any offence of mine against the laws, especially such as you accuse me of, unless he is, as the accusation would imply, insensible to honour, propriety, and decency. Is this his character ? He never has had an enemy bold and false enough to say it : I wonder at this ; yet he never has.”

The people, who had been silent, now began to favour me, when Diopeithes asked me, whether I could deny my conversations with Anaxagoras, and my adherence to his tenets.

Love of truth, pity for Anaxagoras, and pride (it may be) in the strength of mind he had given me, and in the rejection of unworthy notions on the Gods, urged me to say,

“ I deny no conversation I ever had with him, no tenet I ever received, no duty I ever learnt from him. He taught me veneration for the Gods ; and I pray them to render me grateful for it.”

Pericles at this moment stood at my side. Indignation that he should have followed Anaxagoras out of the gates, and should have embraced him affectionately at parting, turned many furious faces, furious cries, and furious gestures against him. He looked round disdainfully, and said aloud,

“ Respect the laws and the unfortunate, you who revere the Gods !

“ It was not the condemned man I followed out of the city ; it was age, which would have sunk under blows ; it was rectitude, which feared not death ; it was friendship, which if I cannot make you esteem, I will not implore you to pardon.

“ At last, O Athenians ! my enemies and yours have persuaded you to assemble in this place, and to witness the humiliation and affliction of one who never failed to succour the unfortunate, and who has been the solace of my existence many years. Am I, of all in Athens, the man who should mistake crimes for virtues : the man pointed out from among the rest as the most insensible to his dignity ? How widely then have you erred in calling me to your counsels ! how long, how wilfully, how pertinaciously ! Is it not easier to believe that two or three are mistaken now, than that you all, together with your fathers and best friends, whose natal days and days of departure from us, you still keep holy, have been always so ? ”

Hermippus and Diopeithes, seeing that many were moved, interrupted him furiously.

“ O Pericles ! ” cried Hermippus, “ we are aware that this woman of Ionia, this Milesian, this Aspasia, entertains the same opinions as yourself.”

“ Highly criminal ! ” answered Pericles, with a smile ; “ I hope no other Athenian is cursed with a wife liable to so grievous an accusation.”

“Scoffer!” cried Diopœithes; “dare you deny that in the summer of this very year, when you were sailing to lay waste the coasts of the Peloponese, you attempted to pervert the religion of the sailors? The sun was suddenly bedimmed: ³⁷ darkness came over the sea, as far even as unto our city! the pilot fell upon his face and prayed: and did not you, O Pericles! raise him up with one hand, and, throwing your mantle over his eyes with the other, ask whether he found any thing dreadful in it? And when he answered in his piety, ‘It is not *that*,’ did you not reply,

“The other darkness is in no otherwise different than in its greater extent, and produced by somewhat larger than my mantle?”

“Proceed to interrogate,” said Pericles.

“Answer that first, O sacrilegious man!” exclaimed Diopœithes.

“Athenians!” said Pericles, “many of you here present were with me in the expedition. Do assure Diopœithes that it was not my mantle which darkened the sea and sun, that to your certain knowledge both sun and sea were dark before I took it off. So that the Gods, if they were angry at all, were angry earlier in the day. And not only did the sun shine out again, bright and serene as ever, but the winds were favourable, the voyage prosperous, the expedition successful.

“It appears to me that the Gods are the most angry when they permit the malicious and the false to prevail over the generous and simple-hearted; when they permit the best affections to be violated, and the worst to rise up in disorder to our ruin. Nor do I believe that they are very well pleased at hearing their actions and motives called in question; or at winks and intimations that they want discernment to find out offenders, and power and justice to punish them.”

“In spite of philosophers,” cried Diopœithes, “we have still our Gods in Athens.”

“And our men too,” replied he, “or these before me must only be the shadows of those who, but lately under my command, won eternal renown in Samos.”

[³⁷ Plutarch says that the expedition was unsuccessful. He adds that the conduct of Pericles “is a question which is discussed in schools of philosophy.”]

Tears rose into his eyes : they were for me ; but he said in a low voice, audible however in the silence that had succeeded to a loud and almost universal acclamation,

“ At least for our lost comrades a few tears are not forbidden us.”

The people struck their breasts : the judges unanimously acquitted me, surrounded Pericles, and followed us home with enthusiastical congratulations.

CLXIII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

NEVER did our house receive so many visitors as on my acquittal. Not only our friends and acquaintances, but every one who had fought under Pericles, came forward to offer his felicitations and his services. I was forgotten . . . the danger, the insult, seemed his. When they had all retired to dinner, he too left me with my music, and I did not see him again until late the next morning. It was evident he had slept but little. He came up to me, and pressing my hand, said,

“ Aspasia ! I have gained a great victory ; the greatest, the most glorious, and the only one not subject to a reverse.”

I thought his words related to his defence of me : I was mistaken.

“ It was yesterday, for the first time,” said he, “ that I knew the extent of my power. I could have demolished the houses of my adversaries ; I could have exiled them from the city ; I could have been their master : I am more ; I am my own.

“ Great injuries create great power : no feeble virtues are necessary to its rejection. In polity,” continued he, “ the humble may rise, but not the fallen. States live but once. Had I no Aspasia, no children, I am ignorant what support I could have found against the impulses of ambition. Many who seize upon kingly power, are the more desirous of possessing it because they have sons to succeed them. Imprudent men ! they expose those sons to infinite dangers, and create no new advantages for them. If they provided for their security, they would abdicate their power, when about to be taken away

by death from those over whom they exercised it. If they provided for their glory, they would not subject them to the reproach, always merited, of possessing less activity and sagacity than their father. Do they care about their wisdom or their virtue? they will not cast them among idlers and sycophants, nor abandon them in a solitary island, where many sing and none discourse. What life is wretcheder? what state more abject?"

"Yours, my dear Pericles!" said I, "is far happier, but by no means enviable."

"True!" answered he: "I am subject to threats, curses, denunciations, ostracism, and hemlock: but I glory in the glory of the state, and I know that I can maintain it."

I was listening with attention, when he said to me with an air of playfulness,

"Am I not a boaster? am I not proud of my command? am I not over-fond of it, when I am resolved not to transmit it hereditarily to another?"

"Rightly judged! dear Pericles!" said I: "you always act judiciously and kindly."

"Political men, like goats," continued he, "usually thrive best among inequalities. I have chosen the meadow; and not on the whole imprudently. My life has been employed in making it more pleasurable, more even, more productive. The shepherds have often quarrelled with me; and but now the sheep too, in their wisdom, turned their heads against me."

We went into the air, and saw Alcibiades walking in the garden. He, not observing us, strode along rapidly, striking with his cane every tree in the alley. When we came up nearer, he was repeating,

"The fanatical knaves! I would knock the heads off all their Mercuries.⁸⁸

"Noisy demagogues! I would lead them into the midst of the enemy . . . I would drag them on by the ears . . . not fifty should return. *They*, in their audacity, impeach Aspasia?

[⁸⁸ The mutilation of the Mercuries in Athens, which took place just before the expedition to Syracuse, was attributed at the time to Alcibiades. See Plutarch's *Life of Alcibiades*.]

they bring tears into the eyes of Pericles! I will bring more into theirs, by holy Jupiter!"

He started at our approach. My husband laid his hands upon the youth's shoulder, and said to him,

"But, Alcibiades! if you do not lead fifty back, where will you leave the captives?"

He sprang to the neck of his guardian,⁸⁹ and turning his face toward me, blushed, and whispered,

"Did she too hear me?"

CLXIV.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

I WOULD not disturb you, my beloved Pericles! but let not any thing else! Why are you so busy now the danger is over? why do so many come to you, with countenances so earnest when they enter, and so different from composed when they go away? You never break your resolutions, otherwise I should fear they might lead you above the place of fellow-citizen. Then farewell happiness, farewell manliness, security, sincerity, affection, honour!

O Pericles! descend from the car of Victory on the course itself. In abandoning power and station, what do you abandon but inquietude and ingratitude?

CLXV.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

WE never alight from a carriage while it is going down a hill, but always at the top or at the bottom. There is less danger in being shaken out than there is in leaping out.

Were I at this juncture to abdicate my authority, I should appear to the people to confess a fault, and to myself to commit one.

I must defend those who would have defended me. Rely on my firmness in all things; on Pericles, one, immutable.

[⁸⁹ First ed.: "Uncle."]

CLXVI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

ALCIBIADES will one time or other bring us all into peril by his recklessness and precipitation.

When he heard I was arraigned, and Pericles threatened, he ran from house to house among the officers of the army, embraced them, knelt before them, adjured them to save their general from ignominy, his wife from insult, the city from mourning, and themselves from inactivity. He swore that if they would not, he would: that two thousand of the same age, or rather older, would join him and obey him, and that he would throw judges, accusers, applauders, listeners, over the Piræus. Not a soldier did he pass without a kiss, without a pressure of the hand, without a promise; not a girl in Athens that was not his sister, not a matron that was not his mother.

Within an hour, in every part of the city there were cries,

“The Lacedæmonians have none of these rogues among them.”

“No accusers there: no judges there.”

“Archidamus is wise; Pericles is wiser: shall the one be a king, the other a culprit?”

“Shall his war-horse,” cried a soldier, “carry paniers?”

“Fore-foot and hind-foot, say I,” cried another, “against these market-place swine, these black-muzzled asses!”

“Out upon them! what have they won for us?” cried another.

“And what have we not won for them?” roared the next.

“What was all the stir about?” asked one more quiet. “They dared to accuse our General of denying their dues to the Gods. Liars! he gives every man his due.” A laugh arose. “No laughing here! I uphold it, we soldiers can take as good care of the Gods as they can. Who believes they ever were in danger? Pericles might have cracked them by the dozen: he has left them all standing; not a head missing. Save him, comrades, from the cowards, the poisoners.”

On all sides of the city the soldiers ran to their officers, and then toward the house of Pericles. It was with difficulty he could dissuade them from their resolution, to confer upon him the same authority and station as Archidamus holds among the Spartans.

"We shall then meet the enemy upon equal terms," said they ; "ay, more than equal ; affability for moroseness, liberality for parsimony."

The greater part of the citizens would have followed ; the turbulent for change, the peaceable for tranquillity.

My husband has allayed the tempest ; his ambition is higher. Nothing can be taken from the name of Pericles, and what is added to it must be of baser metal.

CLXVII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

THE poet Hermippus will be remembered for the malignity of his accusation against me, when all the poetry he has ever written, even the worst of it, is forgotten. At what a price would many men purchase the silence of futurity ! Hermippus will procure it reasonably, excepting two memorable words, Prosecutor of Aspasia. Such people show me only the more clearly to the world by throwing their torches at me. Pallas hath whispered in my ear, both dreaming and awake, that distant time shall recognise me, never perhaps alone, but sometimes by the side of Pericles, and sometimes on the bosom of Cleone.

CLXVIII.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

WHAT but the late outrages, or rather, what but the ascendancy you have obtained in consequence, could have brought the aristocratical party to offer you their services, in helping to keep down the ferocity of the populace ? It might indeed be well to unite them, were it possible ; but not being possible, I would rather place the more confidence in the less ignorant and turbulent.

CLXIX.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

ASPASIA ! as you are cautious not to look earnestly at a handsome man, but rather turn your eyes another way, so must I do in regard to Aristocracy. It is not proper that I should discover any charms in her.

Among the losses I sustained by the flight of youth, I ought to regret my vanity. I had not enough of it for a robe, but I had enough for a vest ; enough to keep me warm and comfortable. Not a remnant have I now. Why be ashamed of our worthy party ? Did I espouse it for its virtues ? Was it ever in high repute for its fidelity ? What is it to me whether a couple or two of housed pards bite one another's tails off or not, excepting that they lie down the quieter for it afterward ? They have still heads and necks to be led along by. We have only to walk up to them firmly, to look at them steadily, speak to them boldly, lay the hand upon them confidently, as their masters, and grasp them with a tenacity that neither relaxes nor hurts. He who does this, and there are some who can do it, may go forth and catch other beasts with them, and feast all his friends in the city.

CLXX.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

THERE is irritation in your irony, O Pericles ! your spirit is not at rest. Unworthily, for the first time since I knew you, have you thought and spoken ! *Thought !* no, Pericles ! passion is not thought. Contumely has produced this bitterness ; it left you with the words.

CLXXI.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

ASPASIA ! you have looked into my heart, and purified it. Your indignities sometimes rise up before me ; and it is only when I am prompted to do wrong by others, that I recover all my firmness. Athens has a right to my solicitude and devotion. I will forget no favour she has ever shewn me, and remember no enmity.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

PEACE is at all times a blessing ; and war, even the most prosperous, a curse. In war extremely few of men's desires are gratified, and those the most hateful ; in peace, many, and those the kindest. Were it possible to limit the duration of hostilities, the most adverse nations, in the enjoyment of a long security, would find time enough for the cultivation of the social affections, and for the interchange of hospitality and other friendly offices. As some bodily diseases, if they can only be deferred for a certain time, terminate altogether, so might the worst of social diseases, war. I do not much wonder that no statesman ever upheld this truth ; but I do greatly that it is to be found among the tenets of no philosopher. We women, who are liable to the worst outrages, and are framed by nature to the greatest susceptibility of fears, usually love war the most, until it enters our houses. We are delighted at the sound and at the spectacles from afar ; and no music is more pleasing to our ears than that which is the prelude to the cries of agony and death. The Spartans are now ravaging all the country round about us. Will they never let me visit their celebrated city ? Must I never fancy I am Helen while I am bathing in the Eurotas or the Tiasa ? I am curious to see their Skeias* and to compare it with our Hecatompedon. It would interest me the more, because in this edifice the lyre of our countryman Timotheus is suspended. It was forfeited, you know, for his having added four strings. Woe betide those improvident creatures who add anything to our delights ! But surely poor Timotheus must have fallen among the poets.

[⁴⁰ This letter is not in 1st ed.]

² "It was of a circular form, with a roof like an umbrella, and erected about 760 years B.C."—*St John's Ancient Greece*. The most learned, the most comprehensive, and the most judicious work ever written about the manners, the institutions, and the localities of that country.

CLXXIII.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

WHEN the war is over, as surely it must be in another year, let us sail among the islands of the Egæan, and be young as ever. O that it were permitted us to pass together the remainder of our lives in privacy and retirement! This is never to be hoped for in Athens.

I inherit from my mother a small yet beautiful house in Tenos: I remember it well. Water, clear and cold, ran before the vestibule: a sycamore shaded the whole building. I think Tenos must be nearer to Athens than to Miletus. Could we not go now for a few days? How temperate was the air, how serene the sky, how beautiful the country! the people how quiet, how gentle, how kind-hearted!

Is there any station so happy as an uncontested place in a small community, where manners are simple, where wants are few, where respect is the tribute of probity, and love is the guerdon of beneficence. O Pericles! let us go; we can return at any time.

CLXXIV.

ANAXAGORAS TO ASPASIA.

THE gratitude and love I owe to Pericles induces me to write the very day I have landed at Lampsacus. You are prudent, Aspasia! and your prudence is of the best quality; instinctive delicacy. But I am older than you, or than Pericles, although than Pericles by only six years . . . and, having no other pretext to counsel you, will rest upon this. Do not press him to abstain from public business: for, supposing he is by nature no obstinate man, yet the long possession of authority has accustomed him to grasp the tighter what is touched; as shell-fish contract the claws at an atom. The simile is not an elegant one, but I offer it as the most apposite. He might believe that you fear for him, and that you wish him to fear; this alone would make him pertinacious. Let every thing take its season with him. Perhaps it is necessary that he should control the multitude: if it is, he will know it; even

you could not stir him, and would only molest him by the attempt. Age is coming on. This will not loosen his tenacity of power . . . it usually has quite the contrary effect . . . but it will induce him to give up more of his time to the studies he has always delighted in, which however were insufficient for the full activity of his mind. Mine is a sluggard : I have surrendered it entirely to philosophy, and it has made little or no progress : it has dwelt pleased with hardly anything it has embraced, and has often run back again from fond prepossessions to startling doubts. It could not help it.

But as we sometimes find one thing while we are looking for another, so, if truth escaped me, happiness and contentment fell in my way, and have accompanied me even to Lampsacus.

Be cautious, O Aspasia ! of discoursing on philosophy. Is it not in philosophy as in love ? the more we have of it, and the less we talk about it, the better. Never touch upon religion with anybody. The irreligious are incurable and insensible ; the religious are morbid and irritable : the former would scorn, the latter would strangle you. It appears to me to be not only a dangerous, but, what is worse, an indelicate thing, to place ourselves where we are likely to see fevers and phrenzies, writhings and distortions, debilities and deformities. Religion at Athens is like a fountain near Dodona, which extinguishes a lighted torch, and which gives a flame of its own to an unlighted one held down to it. Keep yours in your chamber ; and let the people run about with theirs ; but remember, it is rather apt to catch the skirts. Believe me, I am happy : I am not deprived of my friends. Imagination is little less strong in our later years than in our earlier. True, it alights on fewer objects, but it rests longer on them, and sees them better. Pericles first, and then you, and then Meton, occupy my thoughts. I am with you still ; I study with you, just as before, although nobody talks aloud in the schoolroom.

This the pleasantest part of life. Oblivion throws her light coverlet over our infancy ; and, soon after we are out of the cradle we forget how soundly we had been slumbering, and how delightful were our dreams. Toil and pleasure contend

for us almost the instant we rise from it: and weariness follows whichever has carried us away. We stop awhile, look around us, wonder to find we have completed the circle of existence, fold our arms, and fall asleep again.

CLXXV.

ANAXAGORAS TO ASPASIA.

PROXENUS, a native of Massilia, is lately come over to visit his relations and correspondents. The Phocæans, you know, were the founders of Lampsacus, long before they were driven, by the invasion of Cyrus, into Italy and Gaul. Like the generality of mercantile men, Proxenus is little attached to any system of philosophy, but appears to hold in some esteem the name and institutions of Pythagoras.⁴¹ Formerly we have conversed, together with Pericles, on this extraordinary man, regretting that so little is known of him in the midst of his celebrity. Hardly a century hath elapsed since he left his native Samos, and settled on the peaceful shores of Italy. His presence, his precepts, his authority, his example, were unavailing to the preservation of that tranquillity, which the beauty of the climate, the fertility of the soil, and the freedom of the institutions, ought to have established and perpetuated. But it is in the regions of the earth as in the regions of the air, the warm and genial are absorbed by the cold and void, and tempests and storms ensue. The happiness of thousands is the happiness of too many, in the close calculation of some inexpert contriver; and he spoils the honey by smoking the hive. No sooner is a nation at ease, than he who should be the first to participate in the blessing, is the most uneasy; and, when at last he has found a place to his mind, before he lies down he scratches a hole in it, as the dogs do. Such had been the case at Samos, and such was likewise the case at Croton. The difference lay merely in this. Polycrates was a man of abilities, and capable of holding the government in

[⁴¹ For an account of Pythagoras, see Grote's History of Greece (ed. 1872), vol. iv., p. 76. Landor's view of the history of the war between Sybaris and Croton curiously coincides with Grote's, as is indeed not unfrequently the case. Grote's history was published in 1846, ten years after "Pericles and Aspasia."]

his single hand: he loved power, he loved pleasure, he contented the populace, and he reconciled the wise. Croton was subject to the discretion of an oligarchy, incompetent, arrogant, jealous, and unjust. It is untrue that Pythagoras was ever at enmity with him, or was treated by him with disrespect. The one was as fond of authority as the other, and neither was willing to divide it. Whatever could be done to promote the studies of the philosopher was done spontaneously by the chief magistrate, who gave him letters of recommendation to the king of Egypt. By these, and perhaps by these only, could he ever have penetrated in the innermost recesses of the priesthood. Conversing with them, and observing their power over the people, he lost nothing of his inclination to possess the same, and added much to the means of acquiring it. Epimenides⁴² the Cretan was perhaps the exemplar he had resolved to follow, but with mitigated severity. Solon with all his wisdom, and never had mortal more, was unable to bring back the Athenians to the simplicity and equity of their forefathers. Knowing well their propensity to superstition, which always acts with its greatest intensity on the cruel and the loose, he invited Epimenides to come and overawe them by his sanctity and his sacrifices. We cannot doubt that he left the whole management of their conversion to the discretion of the stranger. An Epimenides, in all ages of the world, will possess more influence than a Solon.

[⁴² "Now at that time the Athenians were afflicted by a pestilence, and the Pythian oracle bade them purify the city; wherefore they sent a ship and Nicias, the son of Niceratus, to Crete to fetch Epimenides. And he, coming in this way in the forty-sixth Olympiad, purified the city on this wise. Taking black and white sheep, he drove them into the Areiopagus and allowed them to go thence as they would; ordering also that those who followed them should sacrifice each one to God on the spot where it first laid down. And thus the pestilence ceased. Hence come the altars inscribed with no God's name which even now can be found in the villages round Athens. Others say that the pestilence was caused by the sacrilege committed during the conspiracy of Cylon, and that two youths, Cratinus and Ctesibias, were sacrificed, and that then the pestilence ceased. The Athenians decreed a talent to Epimenides and a ship to take him back to Crete. But he refused the money."—*Diogenes Laertius. Life of Epimenides.*]

Lustrations and sacrifices followed prodigies and omens ; and among the marvels and miracles which the Cretan seer displayed, the last was the greatest in the eyes of Athens. He announced his determination to return home, and refused all the honours and riches the people would have lavished on him. Epimenides wanted nothing : the Gods were less moderate ; they required a human victim. Cratinus was too happy in devoting his blood at the altar ; Ctesibias, on the bosom of his friend.

Proxenus is come in, by appointment, and has broken off an old story, which you know as well as I do. I will give you his ; but not without an account from you in return, of what is going on among the craft at Athens.

CLXXVI.

ASPASIA TO ANAXAGORAS.

SECRECY and mystery drive the uninitiated into suspicion and distrust : an honest man never will propose, and a prudent man never will comply with, the condition. What is equitable and proper lies wide open on the plain, and is accessible to all, without an entrance through labyrinth or defile. I do not love Pythagoras nor Epimenides, nor indeed my friend Socrates so much as perhaps I should, who however, beside his cleverness, has many good qualities. He, like Pythagoras, is endowed with an extraordinary share of intellect ; but neither of them has attained the fixed and measured scope of true philosophy ; the one being in perpetual motion to display his surprising tricks of rhetorical ingenuity, which tend only to the confusion of truth and falsehood, and consequently to indifference in the choice of them ; the other was no less active and restless in the acquisition and maintenance of power. The business of philosophy is to examine and estimate all those things which come within the cognizance of the understanding. Speculations on any that lie beyond, are only pleasant dreams, leaving the mind to the lassitude of disappointment. They are easier than geometry and dialectics ; they are easier than the efforts of a well-regulated imagination

in the structure of a poem. These are usually held forth by them as feathers and thistle-down ; yet condescend they nevertheless to employ them ; numerals as matter and mind ; harmony as flute and fiddle-strings to the dances of the stars. In their compositions they adopt the phraseology and curtsey to the cadences of poetry. Look nearer ; and what do you see before you ? the limbs of Orpheus, bloodless, broken, swollen, and palpitating on the cold and misty waters of the Hebrus. Such are the rhapsodical scraps in their visionary lucubrations. They would poison Homer, the purest and soundest of moralists, the most ancient and venerable of philosophers, not out of any ill-will to him, but out of love to the human race. There is often an enchantment in their sentences, by which the ear is captivated, and against which the intellectual powers are disinclined to struggle ; and there is sometimes, but very rarely, a simplicity of manner, which wins like truth. But when ambition leads them toward the poetical, they fall flat upon thorny ground. No writer of florid prose ever was more than a secondary poet. Poetry, in her bright estate, is delighted with exuberant abundance, but imposes on her worshipper a severity of selection. She has not only her days of festival, but also her days of abstinence, and, unless upon some that are set apart, prefers the graces of sedateness to the revelry of enthusiasm. She rejects, as inharmonious and barbarous, the mimicry of her voice and manner by obstreperous sophists and argue grammarians, and she scatters to the winds the loose fragments of the schools.

Socrates and his disciples run about the streets, pick up every young person they meet with, carry him away with them, and prove to him that everything he ever heard is false, and everything he ever said is foolish. He must love his father and mother in their way, or not at all. The only questions they ask him are those which they know he cannot answer, and the only doctrines they inculcate are those which it is impossible he should understand. He has now fairly reached sublimity, and looks of wonder are interchanged at his progress. Is it sublime to strain our vision into a fog ? and must we fancy we see far because we are looking where nobody can see farther ?

CLXXVII.

ANAXAGORAS TO ASPASIA.

THE Massilian is intelligent and communicative. Some matters which he related at our conference you will perhaps remember in Herodotus : others are his own story ; so let him tell the whole in his own manner.

“ The unbroken force of Persia was brought under the walls of Phocæa. Harpagus, equally wise and generous, offered to our citizens the most favourable terms of surrender. They requested one day for deliberation. Aware of their intentions, he dissembled his knowledge, and allowed them to freight their ships, embark, and sail away. His clemency was however no security to his garrison. Within a few days the expatriated citizens landed again, slew every Persian within the walls, then, casting a mass of iron into the sea, swore they would never return a second time until it rose and floated on the surface. Some historians would persuade us that, after this cruel vengeance, this voluntary and unanimous oath, the greater part returned. Such a tale is idle and absurd. The Persians would too surely have inflicted due vengeance on their perfidy. Some however did indeed separate from the main body of the emigration, and came to reside here in Lampsacus, which their ancestors had founded, and where they continued on the most hospitable terms by frequent intermarriages. The bulk of the expedition reached Alalia, a colony of theirs, led recently into Corsica. Here they continued to reside but a little time unmolested by the jealousy of the Carthaginians and Tyrrhenians. Undaunted by the coalition against them, and by the loss of many ships in a battle with the united fleet of the confederates, they sailed to the neighbourhood of the more ancient Grecian cities, and founded Elea, near Poseidonia. And now probably they first became acquainted with the disciples of Pythagoras. He himself, it is said, retired to Metapontum, and died there. When he went from Samos to Croton he was in the vigour of life ; and not many years elapsed ere he beheld the overthrow of his institutions. He is reported by some to have attained an extreme old age, which his tranquillity and temperance render probable. Even

without this supposition, he may perhaps have visited the coast of Gaul, before or after the arrival of the Phocæans. Collecting, we may imagine, additional forces from the many Ionians whom the generals of Cyrus had expelled, they began to build the city of Massilia, not long after the settlement at Elea, which the vicinity of powerful states, and its incapacity and insecurity for the mooring of a navy, rendered ineligible as the seat of government, or as a constant station."

Thus much I had collected from Proxenus, when he began to give me information on anchorages and harbours, imports and exports: I could not in common civility interrupt him, or ask any thing better than what it pleased him to bestow on me. As our acquaintance strengthens, I will draw more unreservedly from his stores.

CLXXVIII.

ANAXAGORAS TO ASPASIA.

PROXENUS runs into some errors both in regard to facts and motives. It is false that Pythagoras, on returning from his voyage in Egypt, was indignant at finding a tyrant in his native city. Polycrates was in possession of the supreme power when the philosopher left the island, and used it with clemency and discretion. The traveller might have gone and might have returned with discontent, but indignation is averse to favours, and these he was by no means reluctant to accept. Finding he could not be the principal man among his fellow-citizens, he resolved to attain that rank where the supremacy was yet unoccupied. He had seen enough of the Egyptian and heard enough of the Indian priesthood, to convince him that, by a system somewhat similar to theirs, absolute power was more attainable and more safe. He took lessons and precautions; and wherever there was a celebrated and ancient temple, he visited its priests, and explored the origin and conduct of their institutions and authority. In recompense for these, he is reported to have raised his tunic to the holy ones at Olympia, and to have displayed a golden thigh. Nothing so royal, so godlike, had been seen since the reign of Pelops.⁴³

[⁴³ "When Tantalus set before the gods for their banquet the body of his fair son Pelops, they shrank back nor eat of the accursed meal. But she alone Demeter heeded not, thinking sorrowfully of her dear

A golden thigh is worth an ivory shoulder. Such a miracle, we may be sure, was not altogether lost upon the prophetess at Delphi, the fair Themistocleia, who promulgated to him her secrets in return.

His doctrines were kept within his own circle, under the safeguard of an oath. This in all countries is and ought to be forbidden, as being the prerogative of the magistracy. Love of supremacy was the motive in all his injunctions and in all his actions. He avoided the trouble of office and the danger of responsibility : he excluded the commons, and called to him the nobles, who alone were deemed worthy of serving him. Among these he established an equality, which, together with the regularity and frugality of their living, must have tended to conciliate and gratify in some measure the poorer citizens. Certain kinds of animal food were forbidden, as in India and other countries less remote, but, contrary to what we have often heard asserted, no species of pulse or vegetable. *Abstain from the bean*, signified, abstain from elections to political employments. The teacher was in the place of parent to his disciples, who appear to have renounced all the natural affections that had sprung up before they entered the society. His regimen was mild and generous : its principal merit was, however, the repression of loquacity ; common in the ardour of youth after its chase in the fields of knowledge ; commoner, and more unbecoming, in the morose repose of an arrogant philosophy. The history of Pythagoras, forasmuch as he interests us in being the leader of a sect and of a party, is neither long nor obscure. The commons of Croton soon began to perceive that, under his management, the sons of the aristocracy would be no better inclined, than their fathers had been, to concede them an equal share in the government : and the rulers themselves, day after day, lost somewhat of authority in their families. During the whole time that he had resided in Italy, the people of nearly all the Greek cities heaved indignantly under oppressive oligarchies. Sybaris, whose health⁴⁴

daughter Persephone in the dark realm of Pluto. Whereby Pelops' shoulder being missing from his limbs, Hephaistos wrought him a new one, ivory, white gleaming, which all his sons bear even to this day.”]

[⁴⁴ First ed. : “ wealth.”]

they were absorbing in more than Circæan luxuries, rose first upon her feet, and expelled the council of five hundred. They retired for refuge to the lords of Croton; and, when the Sybarites called for justice on them, the demand was voted an affront. And now indeed the veil of sanctity and seclusion was violently rent by the disciples of the Samian. He incited them to maintain peace and good government, pointed out to them the phantom of Freedom, how it blasted every region it passed over, and adjured them to the defence of their rulers, by the purity of their religion. They marched, fought a battle, won it, and Sybaris was swept from the earth.

Discord, I suspect, O Aspasia! is the readiest of all the Deities to appear at our invocation. The oligarchs of Croton, long accustomed to uncontrolled power and irresponsible injustice, refused to the army, now comprehending all the active citizens, even the smallest portion of the spoils. Again did the Crotoniats cry to arms; and again, and in a better cause, were conquerors. Pythagoras * and his disciples fled before them, and the hall in which they assembled was reduced to ashes.

It is only a free city that is strong; for it is only in a free city that the mass of the people can be armed.

CLXXIX.

ASPASIA TO ANAXAGORAS.

MEN of powerful minds, although they never give up Philosophy, yet cease by degrees to make their professions in form, and lay ultimately the presents they have received from her at the feet of History. Thus did Herodotus, thus did Hecatæus, and thus, let me hope, will Anaxagoras. The deeds of past ages are signally reflected on the advancing clouds of the future: here insurrections and wrecks and conflagrations; here the ascending, there the drooping diadem; the mighty host, the mightier man before it; and, in the serener line on the horizon, the emersion of cities and citadels over far-off seas. There are those who know in what quarter to look for them: but it is rarely to their hands the power of promoting the good,

* Pythagoras was a Præ-jesuit.

or averting the evil, is entrusted. Yet, O Anaxagoras! all is not hideous in the past, all is not gloomy in the future. There are communities where the best and wisest are not utterly cast aside, and where the robe of Philosophy is no impediment to the steps of men. Idly do our sages cry out against the poets for mistuning the heart and misgoverning the intellect. Meanwhile they themselves are occupied in selfish vanities on the side of the affections; and, on the side of the understanding, in fruitless, frivolous, indefinite, interminable disquisitions. If our thoughts are to be reduced to powder, I would rather it were for an ingredient in a love-potion, to soften with sympathies the human heart, than a charm for raising up spectres to contract and to coerce it. If dust is to be thrown into our eyes, let it be dust from under a bright enlivening sun, and not the effect of frost and wind.

CLXXX.

ANAXAGORAS TO ASPASIA.

PHILOSOPHY is but dry bread: men will not live upon it, however wholesome: they require the succulent food and exciting cup of Religion. We differ in bodily strength, in compactness of bone, and elasticity of sinew; but we all are subject to the same softness, and nearly to the same distemperature, in the nobler animators of the frame, the brain and blood. Thus it is in creeds: the sage and simple, the ardent enthusiast and the patient investigator, fall into and embrace with equal pertinacity the most absurd and revolting tenets. There are as many wise men who have venerated the ibis and cat, as there are who have bent their heads before Zeus and Pallas. No extravagance in devotion but is defended by some other towering above it; no falsehood but whose features are composed to the semblance of truth. By some people those things are adored that eat them; by others, those that they eat. Men must rest here: superstition, satiated and gorged, can go no farther.

The progression of souls is not unreasonable, the transmigration is. That we shall pass hereafter into many states of successive existence is credible enough; but not upon earth, not

with earthly passions. Yet Pythagoras⁴⁵ was so resolute and unguarded, that he asserted to himself a series of lives, here among men, by the peculiar and especial favour of the Gods, with a perfect consciousness of every change he had undergone. Others became dogs, wolves, bears ; or peradventure men again ; but knowing as little of what had happened. Nevertheless, he pretended that these transmigrations were punishments and rewards. Which is punished ? the dead creature or the living ? the criminal man or the guiltless animal ? Some believe they can throw their sins into a fox : others (in Africa for instance) into a priest. Now the priest may have received what he esteems an equivalent : the fox is at once a creditor and a debtor, with little hope, on either side, of indemnity or balance. It is only when you or Pericles were my audience, that I ever was inclined to press hard against the inconsistencies of philosophers. But we must trace things to their origin where we can. The greater part of those now prevalent are ascribable to the school of Samos. Numerals⁴⁶ were considered by the teacher as materials, and not only as the components, but as the elements, of the world. He misunderstood his own theory : the reason is, he made it his own by theft. The young persons who are hearers of the warier Socrates, catch at it in the playground, and the ill-compacted cake crumbles under their hands.

Unfavourable as my evidence must appear, and is, I am fortunate in being able to lay before you another and comelier representation of a philosopher so enriched by genius. I have always, in all companies, and upon all occasions, been sparing

[⁴⁵ " Now Heraclides of Pontus says that Pythagoras used to assert that he was originally Acthalides, and deemed to be the son of Hermes, who asked of him what gift he would choose beyond immortality ; he therefore prayed that, living and dead, he might be able equally to remember what happened. And therefore in his life he remembered all things ; and, dying, preserved the same memory. Later he passed into the body of Euphorbus, etc."—*Diog. Laert., Pythagoras*, viii. 4.]

[⁴⁶ " The primal origin of all things is unity ; and from the unity arose an infinite duality, being as it were the matter for the causative unity ; then from the unity and the duality come numbers ; from numbers points ; from points lines ; from lines plain figures ; and from plain figures solids."—*Diog. Laert., Pythagoras*, 19.]

of my questions, and have exerted the uttermost ingenuity I am master of, in drawing the truth on, without such an instrument of torture. Probably I have lost by age a part of my dexterity, or presence of mind, or determination; for Proxenus, at the close of our conference, said aloud and sharply,

“ You shall never make *that* out. I think him a very honest man; and I think nobody an honest man who thinks otherwise.”

“ Fair Proxenus! ” I replied, “ you are now greatly more than a philosopher. Some favourite God alone could have inspired all this enthusiasm. In the vigorous expression of that terse apothegm is there not somewhat more of the poet than of the Pythagorean? ”

“ I believe there may be,” replied he; “ I was always much given to poetry.”⁴⁷

He grew instantly calm upon my compliment, and said with the most polite complacency,

“ Well! I am not a match for you Half-Athenians; but read this little volume by my friend Psyllus of Metapontum; it will open your eyes, I warrant it.”

“ Blessings upon it then! ” said I, bending over and taking it with due reverence; “ many of late have done quite the contrary.”

CLXXXI.

PSYLLUS TO PISANDER OF ELEA.

*On the Lawgiver of the Gauls, forwarded to Cleone.*⁴⁸

PISANDER! when last we met, I promised you I would make farther inquiries into the subject of our conversation at the house of Euryalus, and that I doubted not of success in attempting to prove the identity of Pythagoras and Samotes.⁴⁹

[⁴⁷ The words “ In . . . poetry ” (5 lines), not in 1st ed.]

[⁴⁸ The words “ forwarded to Cleone ” are not in 1st ed.]

[⁴⁹ That Samotes (or Dis) gave the first laws to the Celts (whose kingdom he erected about the 15th of Nimbrote) the testimony of Beroëus is proof sufficient. For he not only affirmeth him to publish the same in the fourth of Ninus, but also addeth thereto how there lived none in his days of more excellent wisdom or politic invention than he, whereof he was named Samotes, as some other do affirm. What his laws were is now altogether unknown.—*Holinshed's Chronicles*, ii. 9.]

Strange, that the idea should have occurred to no one else in the course of many generations. Was it not sufficiently clear for the follower of truth? or was it not sufficiently dark and intricate for the lover of mystery and paradox! I imagine it stood between both, at an equal distance from the road of each, and thus it was passed unnoticed.

There is nobody then who can explain to me what was the religion of the Gauls at the time of the Phœcæan emigration. Samotes is recorded as their legislator. Legislation here includes, as it necessarily must in ages of barbarism, not only the civil institutions of the people, but likewise the religious. Yet neither the character nor the tenets, neither the period nor the country, nor indeed the existence of Samotes, have ever been ascertained. Ask the people who he was, and they will tell you that he came to them *over the sea*, long ago. Computation of time, past and future, never occupies, never occurs to, the barbarian. It was long ago that the old tree, against which his cabin leans, sprang up; long ago since the cabin was built; long ago since he was a child. Whatever is not visible to him, or was not, has feeble hold on his memory, and never enters into his calculation. As lawgiver of the Gauls, Samotes is acknowledged to have instructed them both in the ceremony of human oblations, and in the creed of the metempsychosis: for these are mentioned together in the first opening of their history. But it appears to me that the metempsychosis, which is generally held as the basis of druidism, is adventitious. We shall find that this institution is composed of two extremely different and obstinately discordant parts. One, the result of ferocity, varies but little from what exists in an early state of most nations; which diversity may be accounted for, from their climate, their wants, their habits, and pursuits. The other is engrafted on its savage stock, by the steady but not sufficiently impressive hand of a gentle and provident philosophy. You ask me when? by whom? One word will solve both questions: by Samotes; by the man of Samos. Do you doubt that he ever was in Gaul? And do you think it probable that, with his fondness for travelling, his alacrity in inquiry, he would have resided many years in Italy, and have never once visited a country so near to him, a country

so singular in its customs, at least in the combination of them, *if such customs then existed*, a country on whose shores the most valiant of his own countrymen were landing? If at this early epoch the tribes of Gaul believed in the metempsychosis, would not sympathy, would not admiration, have impelled him thither? But if, on the contrary, the doctrine did not prevail, who introduced it? what author of greater weight? I am curious to learn his name or his country. Perhaps by knowing the one, we may guess the other, since the ideas he impressed and left behind him are stamped with a peculiar mark. It may be argued that, able to inculcate lastingly, on the mind of his Gallic proselytes, a dogma which seems to have been received but partially, and to have soon disappeared, where he lived in the full exercise of authority, he still was unable to abolish, as he would wish to do, their sanguinary rites.⁵⁰ He was: for it is easier to learn than to unlearn what incessantly works and excites and agitates our passions. The advantages of the metempsychosis were perhaps the most striking of any that could be presented to warlike minds; to which minds, you must have remarked, O Pisander, advantages will present themselves more readily than disadvantages. Beside, the Druids, whom we cannot well consider at any time a very enlightened order, or likely to see every consequence, every contingency, had no direct interest in suppressing such a doctrine. New colonies were endeavouring to establish themselves in their country; and colonies are the unfailing seed of wars. For, if they flourish, they require an accession of territory; if they do not flourish, they either turn into¹ vagabonds and robbers, or employ violence to remove the obstacles that impede their industry. Something great then and something new was wanting, since the danger that impended was both new and great. Immolations before them on the one side, and the sublime view of the metempsychosis on the other, what could either shake the confidence or abate² the courage of the

[⁵⁰ "The whole of the Gallic nation is given up to superstition. For this reason, those who are afflicted with any serious disease, or who are in battle or other danger, will either sacrifice other men or vow to sacrifice themselves."—*Cæsar De Bello Gallico*, vi. 16.]

[¹ First ed.: "out."]

[² First ed.: "rebate."]

Gauls? A new body was new armour, beautiful, strong, in which they would elude the rage and laugh at the impotence of War. It was delightful to try other scenes of existence, to extinguish their burning wounds in the blood of their enemies, and to mount from the shields of their comrades into fresh life and glory.

A religion thus compounded is absurd and contradictory, but contradiction and absurdity in religion are not peculiar to barbarians. The sacrifice of a human victim was deemed the most solemn and important duty, and they would rather abandon any other ceremony than this. They were savage; we are civilized: they fought, and their adversaries were to share their immortality: we fight to make others as abject as ourselves. They had leaders of proud spirit who raised them to the heavens: we have heavy oligarchs who bend us to the earth.

Rituals, in even the less ardent and intractable, are not soon, nor easily, nor all at once, resigned. We must cease then to marvel that the most impressive, the most awful, and perhaps the most universal of devotions, human sacrifice, should not have been overthrown by the declining years of Pythagoras. It is true he retained his faculties to the last; he retained also the energy of his mind; but the voluntary exile of Samos was purely a lawgiver in philosophy. His religion was not intolerant nor intrusive, but mainly adapted to the humbler offices of temperance and peace. Beyond this, little is known, and much is feigned of him. It would have been well if historians had related to us more of what he did, and less of what he did not. If, instead of the story of his dying in a bean-field, through horror of its impurity, they had carefully traced and pointed out his travels, they would neither have mentioned his voyage to India,* nor have omitted his voyage to Gaul. The priests on the Nile were at all times well acquainted with their brethren on the Indus and Ganges; and indeed I believe that all the great temples of the world have secret communications. Do not lift up your hands, my good Pisander! not underground,

* If Pythagoras had visited India, the learned men who accompanied Alexander would have enquired after him, and would have given the result.

nor magical, but opened from time to time, in cases of difficulty and danger, through confidential agents.*

All religions, in which there is no craft nor cruelty, are pleasing to the immortal Gods; because all acknowledge their power, invoke their presence, exhibit our dependence, and exhort our gratitude. Therefore, let us never be remiss in our duty of veneration to those holy men, who not only manifest their good will toward such as think and worship with them, but also toward the stranger at the steps of other altars. While orators and poets, and philosophers too, are riotous and quarrelsome, malicious and vindictive, Religion leads to herself, and calls her own, the priests of all persuasions, who extend their hands one to another from a distance, unrestricted by jealousy and undefiled by blood.

How great, O my friend, is our consolation, in the certainty that our prayers and sacrifices are accepted! So long as the priests in our country, and around us, live fraternally, let us likewise be of the household. But if any devastating religion should spring up, any which rouses strife and spreads distrust, any which sunders man from man, *that* religion must be rejected by the Gods as wicked, and renounced by their worshippers as ineffectual. The claimants of such an imposition shall never have from me white flour or salt. Should you question why the milder creed had little effect in Gaul; why the golden rules are not valued by the people as the precious relics of a departed master; I reply that, in such a state of society, it was impossible to bring them bodily into use. The priests alone (and it is not every priest who will readily sit down to be instructed) could profit by his knowledge of geometry, or would apply to practice or speculation his theory of numbers. A few of them are not utterly ignorant of either; and it is hence that the trickling may be traced. Men living in a state of barbarism and warfare would entertain but

* The use of gun-powder, for instance, if not of guns, was known to the priests in countries the most distant, and of the most different religions. The army of the Macedonians was smitten by its lightnings under the walls of the Oxydracians; the Gauls, and afterward the Persians, under the Temple of Delphi.³

[³ In 1st ed. this note ends with the words "the army of the Gauls under the walls of Delphi."]

small respect for injunctions to abstain from any obvious and palatable food. Silence, forbearance, quietude, it cannot be expected should be the inmates of a camp. Soldiers without regular supplies (in which consists the main difficulty, and on which depend the main advantages in the science of war) must subsist on whatever they can seize; and men without regular government (by which I can intend no other than of magistrates chosen by the people) would, if we consider the bean as employed in ballot, be ignorant of the lax and foreign interpretation.

As the fountains of the most celebrated rivers are neither easily discoverable nor large, so it often happens that things of the greatest moment, in the political and moral world, are derived from an obscure, from a remote, and from a slender origin. I have given you my opinion on the cause of the supposition; but having heard another, however less probable, I will report it.*

In the south of Italy, where Pythagoras resided, are⁴ several cities, Tarentum in particular, of Lacedæmonian foundation. One festival of this people, whose ancestors were distinguished for frugality, was nevertheless, even in the midst of primitive Lacedæmon, even in the bosom of Temperance herself, deformed with foul excess. It was called *the Feast of the Nurses*. They carried male infants to the Temple of Diana, and, after exposing themselves among the tents where the populace was assembled, fed them with the entrails of swine, which had been sacrificed, and with figs, vetches, and beans. Their morals, we may believe, were not rendered more austere by the fertility and invitations of a delicious climate. At a distance from Taygetus and Cithæron, they were (allow me the expression) beyond the latitudes of checking breezes from the headlands of bluff morality; and the voice of the Sirens sounded in ears sealed only to the call of reprobation and reproof. The hunter of Laconia would have smiled to hear them imitate his shout, and tell the trembling Sybarite, their neighbour, that such were the shouts of Spartans. He would have wondered that terror should be excited in another by that which excited only ridicule in him-

* Qu. whether any author now extant, excepting Psyllus in his epistle, mentions this.

[⁴ First ed.: "were."]

self; he would have stared not a little at the start from the couch, and the rustle of roses on the marble floor.

Pythagoras could not say, Abstain from the city, abstain from the fellowship of the Tarentines; it would have exasperated them against him; but he might have heard related to him some instance of sensuality which happened at this festival, and might have said briefly, yet significantly, abstain from beans. Ordinances have often been observed and commemorated far beyond the intent and expectation of their founder. Certain it is that, formerly as at present, in the popular states of Italy, the election and rejection of magistrates were signified by beans; and no less evidently was it the interest of the philosophical stranger to dissuade his auditors from the concerns of state. This, while it procured toleration and conciliated esteem, introduced them to such habitudes of close reflection, as withheld them from being the agitators, and fitted them to become, by just degrees, the leaders of the commonwealth. After all, if they pursued any other line of conduct, *he* at least would escape uncensured, and might complete without juridical, or, what he would more have deprecated, popular molestation, his scheme of general reform.

Abstain from beans we have considered in a moral and political, but also in a religious point it may easily be defended, by⁵ high authorities. However, I must express my doubts whether in the lifetime of Pythagoras his followers abstained from this article of food. Is it not probable that those who came after him took the letter for the spirit, as we know it to have happened in some other doctrines, and within a century from the founder's death? To abstain with rigour from things indifferent (and from some indeed they did abstain), may not appear consistent with the exercise of reason. Arrogant it may be thought in him who commanded, and infantine in those who obeyed. But, in the religions which have continued the longest, certain foods (it is said) are prohibited; and the observance of such prohibition is the moral cause of their duration. He who will not obey in what is easy, will not obey in what is difficult: but the subjects of these theocratical govern-

[⁵ First ed.: "from."]

ments are every day refreshed with the exercise of salutary compliance. At the moment when a sense of duty is liable to be extinguished in others, in them it is sure to be excited ; there is piety if they fast ; if they satisfy their hunger there is impiety. It appears to me, that the wisest and most provident of oriental legislators are in nothing more worthy of our esteem and veneration, than in the ordinance of these prohibitions. Can we ascertain what nations have, or what nations have not, been cannibals ? Why does it revolt more strongly against our senses to eat a man than to kill one ? The crime in itself is surely not so great. Nature has fixed certain barriers, of which many seem fancifully chosen and arranged, against the irruption of our appetites. There are animals never brought upon our tables, although the flesh is said to be wholesome, and the flavour grateful. It is needless to seek how first it happened that man violated the semblance of himself and of his Gods. Was it war, was it fanaticism, or was it famine, that impelled him to the accursed sacrifice ? Pisander ! Pisander ! he had tasted the fatness of the lamb that he carried in his bosom : he had tempted the fawn by caresses from afar : it had licked his hand, and he had shed its blood !

Cannibals have been found where food was plentiful : and the savage does not loathe for its ugliness the hugest serpent. There must be something, and it must be in the brute creation, which he shall fear to consume for the impiety of the deed.

The sacrifice of a human victim can only be performed with the concurrence of prince or magistracy. Of course Pythagoras could not oppose it, consistently with his profession of abstaining from their concerns. Nevertheless he was at liberty to introduce a doctrine which, as the day of cultivation advanced, would undermine the pyre and release the victim. The Druids were, and are, and always will be, barbarous. Their order has not existed long, and will soon terminate, the Gauls being not only the most ferocious of mankind, but the most suspicious and acute ; they are also the most versatile, the most inconstant, and (what makes sad work with solemnities) on the detection of halt or blemish,

men⁶ of irrepressible mimicry, of unquenchable derision. Those in the vicinity of Massilia are free already from the furies of fanaticism. Intercourse with the Tyrrhenians and Ligurians has humanized them greatly, and the softer voice of Ionia has now persuaded them, that the Gods can take us when they want us, without wicker baskets;⁷ and that the harp and dance are as pleasant to them as the cries and agonies of dying men.”

Thus ends the epistle of Psyllus; and at least in the end of it I think we shall agree. His comfits will sweeten my pomegranate.

CLXXXII.

ASPASIA TO ANAXAGORAS.

WHATEVER may be the partiality of your Massilian to Pythagoras, it is evident enough that the philosopher of Samos, possessing great acquired intelligence, and gifted with extraordinary powers of mind, was an intriguer and an impostor. And truly, O Anaxagoras, it is much to be desired that others now living were exempt from a certain part of such an imputation. Our friend Socrates, I am sorry to say, intimates to his friends in private that he has a kind of genius⁸ always at his ear, who forewarns him in affairs apparently the most indifferent. If we consider it well, we shall be of opinion that there are few things so indifferent as they seem to us; few, the consequence of which may not, visibly or invisibly, act with grave importance on the future. But if a Genius, a

[⁶ Not in 1st ed. Like many men of his time, Landor was too enthusiastic over the first beginnings of the French Revolution to pardon the French their submission to Napoleon. But, unlike some, he remained a Republican all his days.]

[⁷ “Some make use of huge images woven of osiers, which they fill with living men, and these being lighted the men perish in the flames.”—*Cesar De Bello Gallico*, vi. 16.]

[⁸ “You have often heard me speak in times past of an oracle or sign which comes to me, and is the divinity which Miletus ridicules in the indictment. This sign I have had ever since I was a child. The sign is a voice which comes to me and always forbids me to do something which I am going to do, but never commands me to do anything.”—*Jowett's Plato, Apology*, 31.]

superhuman power, were to influence the actions of any man, surely it would be those which must necessarily put in motion the levers and regulators of a commonwealth. We are all under the guidance of a Deity if we will let him act on us ; but it is as easy to slip from under his guidance, as it is difficult to escape from the penalties of our error. Already there are some who are jealous of Socrates and his Genius ; and who perhaps may try, hereafter, whether the Genius will help him to elude the laws. For novelties in religion, as you know, are not held guiltless ; and a Genius that renders a man wiser or better is indeed an innovator. As they cannot catch him, I fear they may lay their hands upon our Socrates.

CLXXXIII.

ANAXAGORAS TO PERICLES.

IT is easier to answer the questions than the kindnesses of your letter. I will begin then.

We have not two factions ; aristocracy has kept aloof from Lampsacus. The people find themselves so secure and comfortable under the ancient laws, that they would no more hazard any innovation, than they would alter their course at sea when they were sailing with a favourable wind. They hardly can be brought to believe that any nation hath abrogated two laws in twenty or thirty years, or hath been obliged by prosperity or adversity to enact so many in so brief a space of time. Miletus was always just to her colonies. She has founded more than sixty ; and not a single one has ever had reason to complain of her exactions or restrictions. All the great empires that have existed in the world, Chaldæa, Babylonia, Media, Persia, all these taken together, have not sent out the hundredth part of what has gone forth from the bosom of Miletus. Surely, of political glory this is the highest : to rear carefully a numerous family, educate it honestly, protect it bravely, and provide for it plenteously and independently. Her citizens have more reason to be proud of this section in their polity, than some others who are much powerfuller. Would not every mother wish to see her own features in her daughter ? her own constitutional strength, her own character,

her own prosperity? What inconsistency, then, what folly, what madness, for the metropolis to wish otherwise in regard to her colony! Is the right arm stronger by rendering the left weaker? Gain we any vantage-ground against our enemy by standing on the prostrate body of our child?

To whom am I writing? to Pericles? yes, to him; to the man who best knows that the strongest reasons of state proceed from the mouth of justice.

And now let me loose again. Seldom have I written, and never have I spoken, so long at a time on such a subject. Could you ever draw from me even an opinion on these matters, in a city where (excepting myself) you alone preserved in them your calmness, equanimity, and composure? Even Aspasia, who unites the wisdom of the heart to the wisdom of the understanding, and has more in both than any one else in either, was sometimes in perturbation at politics, and sometimes in grief.

A while since I sent her a dozen or more of such verses⁹ as our young people, and others who should know better, are idle enough to compose in the open air. My neighbour, Proxenus, the Massilian, has been employed in making a collection from the gardens round about. The greater part, he tells me, are upon love and flowers, dews and suns, stars and moons, evenings and mornings, springs and autumns. He observes that summer is rather out of favour with the poets; and that where winter is mentioned, he has often found the whole composition scored across with a nail, or with a piece of tile, or defaced in some other way as nigh at hand. Proxenus is no poet, and therefore it is the more amusing to hear him discourse on poetry.

“I am sated with flowers,” said he. “The Muses ought to keep out of the market: if they must come into it, let them not come as greengrocers. See, what a large proportion in my collection is upon flowers and foliage, with here and there a solitary turtle-dove, and a nightingale deplorably belimed. A few pious men indeed have written in reverence of the tutelary God, and have done all they could to repress the licentious-

[⁹ The verses written in Greek and Roman gardens were usually addressed to Priapus, the tutelary god of gardens.]

ness of the young and thoughtless. The best inscription I have found among them is in the garden of Mnestheus ; and this perhaps is worth preservation rather for its grave admonition and religious sentiment than its poetry."

So far Proxenus. I do not remember what were those verses I sent to Aspasia ; there may be more good sense in these.

INSCRIPTION ON A PLINTH IN THE GARDEN OF MNESTHEUS AT LAMPSACUS.

Youngsters ! who write false names, and slink behind
The honest garden-god to hide yourselves,
Take heed unto your ways ! the worshipful
Requires from all upright straightforwardness.
Away, away then subterfuge with him !
I would not chide severely ; nor would he,
Unless ye thwart him ; for alike we know
Ye are not childisher than elder folk,
Who piously (in doing ill) believe
That every God sees every man . . . but one.

CLXXXIV.

ASPASIA TO ANAXAGORAS.

THE style of your Psyllus is, I presume, Massilian. He walks heavily through high-stemmed leafy flowers. Does he not deserve now this little piece of imitation ?

Forbear to call it mockery ; for mockery is always rude and inhumane.

Our friend Socrates has taken a wife. In every danger he has been thought singularly brave ; and, if she is what she is represented, the action proves it. He retains his custom of sitting in the porticoes, and beckoning to passers, and conversing on loveliness, and commanding equanimity, and driving the schoolmen mad. Yet among the Epithalamions, the cleverest is one which celebrates him for the quality most remote from his character. Thales and Pherecydes and Pythagoras, and some few more, would really have made philosophy domestic. Our epithalamist, intending nothing satirical, tells Socrates (whom neither celibacy nor marriage have detained at home, and who never could resist an opportunity of wrangling, while

a sophist or a straw was before him) that he first brought philosophy from heaven into private houses! I hope he will find her in his own as often as he wants her: but if he is resolved to bring her down into ours, such as we have seen her lately, the city will be all in a bustle with the double-bolting of doors.

Let the archons look to it.

CLXXXV.¹⁰

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I HAVE been exhorting Pericles to leave Attica for awhile, and to enjoy with me the pleasures of retirement in the little isle of Tenos. He listened to my entreaty with his usual attention and interest, and soon began to expatiate on the charms, on the benefits, on the necessity, of retirement. Without a question I fancied I had persuaded him to compliance, when, with an air of sadness so attempered with sweetness as it never was in any other man, he said to me, "Aspasia! you can create in me as many wishes as spring up in the bosom of a child; and it is partly by planting the slips of your own in mine, and partly by the warmth of your eloquence. What then must be my sense of duty to my country, if, after all these representations, and after all my fatigues and injuries, my determination is fixed to remain some time longer in the city? Hereafter we may visit Tenos; hereafter I may drink of the limpid brook, before the house, whose cold water has reddened this hand when you were little. We will build our navies on it: we will follow them along the bank, and applaud them as they clash. Even I foresee a perfidy in Aspasia; she will pretend to run as fast as she can, and yet let Pericles outrun her. No, no; that kiss shall not obviate such duplicity. Have I no reason for the suspicion when you often have let me get the better of you in argument? Another and easier life may await us there, when this political one is uncoiled from us. But our child must associate with the children of the Athenians: he must love

[¹⁰ This letter is not in 1st ed.]

his father's friends ; he must overcome and pardon his father's adversaries. We ought never to buy happiness with our children's fortunes, but happiness is not the commodity ; it is desertion, it is evasion, it is sloth. However, there is at last a time when we may hang up our armour and claim the stipend of retirement and repose. Meanwhile, let us fix our eyes on Tenos."

Whether, O Cleone, we regard the moral or the material world, there is a silent serenity in the highest elevation. Pericles appears the greater when seen on his solitary eminence against the sky. Power has rendered him only more gracious and compliant, more calm and taciturn.

CLXXXVI.

ANAXAGORAS TO ASPASIA.

PERICLES tells me that you are less tranquil than you were formerly, and that he apprehends you are affected not a little by the calumnies of your enemies.

If it is true that there can be no calumny without malice, it is equally so that there can be no malice without some desirable quality to excite it. Make up your mind, Aspasia, to pay the double rate of rank and genius. It is much to be the wife of Pericles ; it is more to be Aspasia. Names that lie upon the ground are not easily set on fire by the torch of Envy, but those quickly catch it which are raised up by fame, or wave to the breeze of prosperity. Every one that passes is ready to give them a shake and a rip ; for there are few either so busy or so idle as not to lend a hand at undoing.

You, Pericles, and myself, have a world of our own, into which no Athenian can enter without our permission. Study, philosophize, write poetry. These things I know are difficult when there is a noise in the brain ; but begin, and the noise ceases. The mind, slow in its ascent at first, accelerates every moment, and is soon above the hearing of frogs and the sight of brambles.

CLXXXVII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

A PESTILENCE has broken out in the city, so virulent in its character, so rapid in its progress, so intractable to medicine, that Pericles, in despite of my remonstrances and prayers, insisted on my departure. He told me that, if I delayed it a single day, his influence might be insufficient to obtain me a reception in any town, or any hamlet, throughout the whole of Greece. He has promised to write to me daily, but he declared he could not assure me that his letters would come regularly, although he purposes to send them secretly by the shepherds, fumigated and dipped in oil before they depart from Athens. He has several farms in Thessaly under Mount Ossa, near Sicurion. Here I am, a few stadioms from the walls. Never did I breathe so pure an air, so refreshing in the midst of summer. And the lips of my little Pericles are ruddier and softer and sweeter than before. Nothing is wanting, but that he were less like me, and more like his father. He would have all my thoughts to himself, were Pericles not absent.

CLXXXVIII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

ASPASIA ! I will not allow either the little Pericles, or the great one, or both together, to possess all your thoughts. Nay, your letter itself contradicts you. Cleone and the plague must intercept and divide them occasionally.

Pestilences are maladies that rage with more violence than others, but, like all violent things, soon pass away. The worst effects of them are the seditions, and other sad irregularities, that always burst forth when the banner of Death is unfurled in a populous city. But it is mostly the intemperate that are swept away.

Alas ! I must not dissemble the magnitude of the danger ; for I know your resolution, I might say rashness. What I have written is true ; but I am most afraid that you will not fear enough. Keep up your courage where you are ; do not exert it anywhere else.

CLXXXIX.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

CLEONE ! Cleone ! if you could but see Athens, you would find it a ditch to throw all your dogmas into. The pestilence has not only seized the intemperate, but, like that which Chryses imprecated on the Greeks before Troy, smitten nobler heads after the viler. Pericles himself has not escaped it. He refused to abstain from appearing in the assemblies of the people, and among the consultations to regulate (as far as might be) the burial and burning of the dead. His temperance and courage, the most efficacious preservatives against contagion, failed at length in the effect. The fever seized him, and although he has risen from his bed free from all symptoms of the distemper, his strength is impaired, and many years (he tells me) seem to have crowded into a few days.

CXC.

ANAXAGORAS TO ASPASIA.

BEHOLD, O Aspasia ! I send you verses. They certainly are less valuable than some in your collection, but, to make up the difference, I enclose a cockle-shell.

I.

Beauty ! thou art a wanderer on the earth,
And hast no temple in the fairest isle
Or city over-sea, where Wealth and Mirth
And all the Graces, all the Muses, smile.

2.

Yet these have always nurst thee, with such fond,
Such lasting love, that they have followed up
Thy steps thro' every land, and placed beyond
The reach of thirsty Time thy nectar-cup.

3.

Thou art a wanderer, Beauty ! like the rays
That now upon the platan, now upon
The sleepy lake, glance quick or idly gaze,
And now are manifold and now are none.

4.

I have call'd, panting, after thee, and thou
 Hast turn'd and look'd and said some pretty word,
 Parting the hair, perhaps, upon my brow,
 And telling me none ever was preferr'd.

5.

In more than one bright form hast thou appear'd,
 In more than one sweet dialect hast spoken:
 Beauty! thy spells the heart within me heard,
 Griev'd that they bound it, grieves that they are broken.

All the verbiage which you will find below I found rudely scrawled on a stone-table, in the garden of my next neighbour Parmenio. I perceive it to be of little worth, by this; it has found an imitator, or rather a correspondent: yet, as he writes angrily, it may not be much amiss.

These are scratched under the preceding.

I have some merit too, old man!
 And show me greater if you can.
 I always took what Beauty gave,
 Nor, when she snatch'd it back, look'd grave.
 Us modest youths it most beseems
 To drink from out the running streams:
 Love on their banks delights to dwell . . .
 The bucket of the household well
 He never tugs at, thinking fit
 Only to quench his torch in it.
 Shameless old fellow! do you boast
 Of conquests upon every coast?
 I, O ye Gods! should be content
 (Yea, after all the sighs I've spent,
 The sighs, and, what is yet more hard,
 The minas, talents, gone in nard!)
 With only one: I would confine
 Meekly this homesick heart of mine
 'Twixt Lampsacus and Hammon's shrine.

CXI.

ASPASIA TO ANAXAGORAS.

IT is really odd enough that no temple or altar was ever dedicated to Beauty. Vengeance, and other such personages,

whom *we*, Anaxagoras, venture occasionally to call allegorical, have altars now, and more than now of worshippers.

Whatever, in your satirical mood, you may think about the cockle-shell, I shall always value it, as much nearly as the verses, and I have ordered it to be made into a clasp for them. Taunt me then as often as you please. It will be like girls pelting with roses: if there is any harm done, it is only to the fingers of the pelter.

CXCII.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

Now the fever is raging, and we are separated, my comfort and delight is in our little Pericles. The letters you send me come less frequently, but I know you write whenever your duties will allow you, and whenever men are found courageous enough to take charge of them. Although you preserved with little care the speeches you delivered formerly, yet you promised me a copy of the latter, and as many of the earlier as you could collect among your friends. Let me have them as soon as possible. Whatever bears the traces of your hand is precious to me: how greatly more precious what is imprest with your genius, what you have meditated and spoken! I shall see your calm thoughtful face while I am reading, and will be cautious not to read aloud lest I lose the illusion of your voice.

CXCIII.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

ASPASIA! do you know what you have asked of me? Would you accept it, if you thought it might make you love me less? Must your affections be thus loosened from me, that the separation, which the pestilence may render an eternal one, may be somewhat mitigated? I send you the papers. The value will be small to you, and indeed would be small to others, were it possible that they could fall into any hands but yours. Remember the situation in which my birth and breeding and bent of mind have placed me. Remember the powerful rivals I have had to contend with, their

celebrity, their popularity, their genius, and their perseverance. You know how often I have regretted the necessity of obtaining the banishment of Cimon, a man more similar to myself than any other. I doubt whether he had quite the same management of his thoughts and words, but he was adorned with every grace, every virtue, and invested by Nature with every high function of the soul. We happened to be placed by our fellow-citizens at the head of two adverse factions. Son of the greatest man in our annals, he was courted and promoted by the aristocracy : I, of a family no less distinguished, was opposed to him by the body of the people. You must have observed, Aspasia, that although one of the populace may, in turbulent times, be the possessor of great power, it rarely has happened that he retained it long, or without many sanguinary struggles. Moroseness is the evening of turbulence. Every man after a while begins to think himself as capable of governing as one (whoever he may be) taken from his own rank. Amidst all the claims and pretensions of the ignorant and discontented, the eyes of a few begin to be turned complacently toward the more courteous demeanour of some well-born citizen, who presently has an opportunity of conciliating many more, by affability, liberality, eloquence, commiseration, diffidence, and disinterestedness. Part of these must be real, part may not be. Shortly afterward he gains nearly all the rest of the citizens by deserting his order for theirs : his own party will not be left behind, but adheres to him bravely, to prove¹¹ they are not ashamed of their choice, and to avoid the imputation of inconsistency.

Aspasia ! I have done with these cares, with these reflections. Little of life is remaining, but my happiness will be coetaneous with it, and my renown will survive it : for there is no example of any who has governed a state so long, without a single act of revenge or malice, of cruelty or severity. In the thirty-seven years of my administration I have caused no citizen to put on mourning.¹² On this rock, O Aspasia ! stand my Propylæa and my Parthenon.

[¹¹ First ed. : " shew."]

[¹² See Langhorne's Plutarch, where these words are given as the last that Pericles spoke.]

CXCIV.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

GRATITUDE to the immortal Gods overpowers every other impulse of my breast. You are safe.

Pericles! O my Pericles! come into this purer air! live life over again in the smiles of your child, in the devotion of your Aspasia! Why did you fear for me the plague within the city, the Spartans round it? why did you exact the vow at parting, that nothing but your command should recall me again to Athens? Why did I ever make it? Cruel! to refuse me the full enjoyment of your recovered health! crueler to keep me in ignorance of its decline! The happiest of pillows is not that which Love first presses; it is that which Death has frowned on and passed over.

CXCV.¹⁸

ANAXAGORAS TO ASPASIA.

HAVE you never observed, O most observant Aspasia, that there are many things which we can say in writing, and which we cannot so well deliver in speech, even to our nearest friend? During all the time of my residence with you and Pericles, intimate as was our familiarity from the commencement, never once did either of you express a wish to hear the reason why I left my countrymen for strangers. The dislike I always had to relate my concerns, and to present my features for inspection, withheld me from the narrative: and delicacy withheld you from inquiry.

Come, I will live over with you now that portion of my life which I did not live with you before. I would not escape for refuge into crowds: I would not repair my fortune by hammering on the anvil in the Agora: I would not (pardon my application of our proverb at Clazomenai) make my purse of swine's ears. Such is the occupation of those who intend to profit by a public auditory.

Often had I been solicited by the worthier of the citizens

[¹⁸ Not in 1st ed.]

to appear in public, and to take a part, if not in the administration of affairs, at least in the debates. It ill suited my temper and turn of mind. Ours, like most free cities, was divided into two factions, the aristocratical and democratical. While others were making their way forward to the head of them, I sat quietly at home, and, to relax my mind occasionally from its sustained and fixed position for loftier and purer speculations, meditated on the advantages and disadvantages of each government. No small quantity had I written at last of remarks and aphorisms : behold a specimen : in most cities the majority is composed of the ignorant, the idle, and the profligate. In most cities, after a time, there are enough of bad citizens to subvert good laws. Immoral life in one leader of the people is more pernicious than a whole street full of impurities in the lower quarters of the community, seeing that streams, foul or fair, cannot flow upward.

Be sure, Aspasia, I never promulgated such perilous doctrines. To prove that I was erroneous in the two first positions, the citizens would have poisoned or stoned me, and their orators would clearly show my unfitness to give advice, in my attempting to demonstrate no more important or novel a truth than that water cannot run up a mountain. Such is the employment, such the ingenuity and sincerity of eloquence.

I was inclined to the democracy, because I knew that all government ought to be chiefly for the advantage of the many ; but when I considered long and attentively its operations and effects, I began to doubt whether the people are more likely to know their interests than the aristocracy are to promote them. Immovable property is the only sure pledge for political equity, and the holders are not at all times ready to offer it. Merchants are the worst of adventurers and gamesters, because their native land is not their country. They are the sucklings of an alien, and love her best who gives them nutriment. Their preponderance in a state will invariably be in its subversion.

I intended to speak of myself, but you see I cannot keep to my theme ; it soon tires me . . . soon escapes me. The scanty streamlet has run but a little way, and is lost among

the sands. A few words more, however. Before I left my country, I offered some brief observations on important matters, then in discussion, to persons in authority. Do I much over-estimate my solidity of intellect, my range of comprehension, or my clearness of discernment, in believing that all these qualities in me, however imperfect, are somewhat more than equivalent to theirs? I concealed this truth from them, if truth it be, and told them only what I thought it was their interest, and would surely be their intention, to perform. They rewarded me by suffering me to depart in peace, unanswered and unnoticed. We might imagine that advice, like manure, is only good and applicable when it has lain a long while by. He reasons ill who reasons with a bad reasoner. . . . He walks on chaff and tires himself without progress and without impression. I never expostulate with the self-sufficient; but on this occasion I desired a friend of theirs to enquire of them whether they thought a conflagration in Clazomenai would only warm their baths and cook their dinners. Had I been willing to abuse my faculties, it would have been an easy matter for me to have swept them from their places, and to have assumed the highest; for the rapacious has no hold upon the people, and vulgar manners in the candidate for office are no recommendation even to vulgar men.

Here endeth my life in my own country.

CXCVI.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

It has been wisely said that Virtue hath only to be seen to be beloved: but unwisely, that Vice¹⁴ hath only to be seen to be hated. Certain it is that the more habituated we are to the contemplation of a pure and placid life, the more do we delight in it. I wish it were equally so that every glance at Vice loosened a feather from her plumage, and that on a

[¹⁴ "Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."
—*Pope, Essay on Man*, ii. 217.]

nearer approach and more stedfast observation she grows hideous. Proofs to the contrary come before us every day.

Eupolis 'and Mnesilochos and Callias and Cratinos, like most other authors, are indifferent to any result from their writings but popularity and emolument. And we are informed here at Miletus that several of your philosophers are now employing a language, on the powers and provinces of love, far more seductive to the passions of their youthful auditors than the most indecent of theatrical ribaldry. For surely there is little seductive in a boisterous jocularity, that seizes and holds down the hand from the painfully blushing forehead, and forces the eyes to see what they would shun. Ionian manners, I am afraid, are as licentious as the Athenian : but ours are become so by our intercourse with the Persians, the Athenian by theirs with the Philosophers. It is only of late that such poisonous perfumery has had this influence on the brain ; it is only since the departure of the sedate unostentatious Anaxagoras, that syllogists have snapped their fingers at experiment. Against such men the arrows of ridicule are well directed : but these arrows fall harmlessly from flowing robes ; and indeed the purple dye is everywhere a panacea.

CXCVII.

ANAXAGORAS TO PERICLES.

THANKS, O Pericles, for your provident care of me ! Provident do I say ? No, any thing but that ; kind, generous, profuse ; but if you really saw the extent of my wants, you would only send me notice that you and those about you are well and happy.

The fever which has broken out in your city will certainly spare you if you reside in the Acropolis : and yet you tell me that you are resolved on taking no such precaution, lest you should appear to claim an exemption from the common peril.

What prudent men were my enemies in Athens, to send me back hither ! they would not let me live nor die among them !

You have little curiosity to know any thing about private

men and retired places. Nevertheless I will tell you and Aspasia what is Lampsacus.

Shrimps and oysters are the lower order of the inhabitants : and these, it is pretended, have reason to complain of the aristocracy above them. The aristocracy on their side contend that such complaints are idle and unfounded ; that they are well fed and well clothed, and that the worst that ever happens to them is to be taken out of their beds, and to be banded, marshalled, and embarked, in the service of their country. In few more words, we all are either fishermen or vine-dressers. I myself am a chief proprietor : my tenement is small, but my vineyard is as spacious as any about. It is nearly a hundred of my paces broad : its length I cannot tell you, for in this direction it is too steep for me walk up it. My neighbours have informed me that there is a fine spacious view of the Hellespont and headlands from the summit. I only know that there is a noble God,¹⁵ a century old at the least . . . he who protects our gardens and vines. An image of him stands either at the top or the bottom of every avenue in the vicinity. He frowns in many of them ; yet, amid all his threats, there is in his good-humoured gravity something like a half-invitation. The boys and girls write verses under him, very derogatory to his power and dignity. They usually write them, I understand, in one another's name ; just as if he could not find them out, and would not punish them in due season. Enough of this : I have somewhat less to say about myself. The people love me, for I am no philosopher here, and have scarcely a book in the house. I begin to find that eyes are valuables and books utensils. Sitting at my door, I am amused at the whistle of curlews, and at their contentions and evolutions, for a better possession than a rabble's ear. Sometimes I go down, and enjoy a slumber on the soft deep sands ; an unexpected whisper and gentle flap on the face from the passing breeze awakens me, or a startlingplash from the cumbersome wave as it approaches nearer. Idleness is as dear to

[¹⁵ "This god (Priapus) is honoured also elsewhere where there are herds of sheep and goats and swarms of bees, but the people of Lampsacus honour him especially above all other gods, saying that he is the son of Dionysus and Aphrodite."—*Pausanias*, ix. 31.]

me, reflection as intense, and friendship as warm as ever. Yes, Pericles! Friendship may pause, may question, may agonize, but her semblance alone can perish.

My moon is in the last quarter, and my days ought now to be serene: they are so. Be yours no less; yours and Aspasia's!

CXCVIII.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

ONE true and solid blessing I owe to my popularity. Seldom is it that popularity has afforded any man more than a fallacious one. Late wisdom, and dearly bought, is mine, Aspasia! But I am delaying your delight, at one moment by the hurry of my spirits, at another by the intensity of my reflections. Our Pericles¹⁶ is Athenian in privileges as in birth. I have obtained a law to revoke a former one enforced by me . . . and felt no shame. If I could hope that other statesmen would take example from my faults, if I could hope that at any future time they would cease to be opinionative, imperious, and self-willed, mistaking the eminence of station for the supremacy of wisdom, I would entreat them to urge no measure in which might be traced the faintest sign of malice or resentment, whether in regard to parties or private men.¹⁷ But alas! the inferior part of man is the stronger; we cannot cut the centaur in twain: we must take him as we find him composed, and derive all the advantage we can both from his strength and his weakness.

I am growing the politician again, when I should be the husband and father.

The odious law, the weight of which I drew upon my own head,* is abrogated. The children of women not Athenian,

[¹⁶ See Plutarch for another account of the repeal of the law referred to. "This Pericles is he who afterwards defeated the Peloponnesians in a seafight at Arginusæ, and was put to death by the people together with his colleagues."—Langhorne's *Plutarch, Pericles*.]

[¹⁷ First ed.: "individuals."]

* It is stated in every *Life of Pericles* that he obtained the enactment of it. This is incorrect. The law was an ancient one, and required fresh vigour and vigilant observance at a time when hostilities were imminent, and when many thousands were residing in the city, who

are declared free citizens. Many good men, many good mothers, have mourned the degradation of theirs through my severity.

How dear, above the sweetest of Spring, are the blossoms that appear in the less genial hours of winter ! how dear, above earth, above all things upon earth (Aspasia will pardon this, whether true or false) is our little Pericles ! Am I dreaming when I imagine I see this beautiful boy, with Health and Hope beside him, kneeling on the border of the tomb, and raising up from it a whole family, in long perspective ! We were gone, I thought, we were lost for ever. The powerful father merged his whole progeny in utter darkness ; an infant shall reclaim it.

No longer is there a cloud upon my brow : no longer is there, I am apt to think, a pestilence in Athens.

CXCIX.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

BLESSINGS on the generosity of the Athenians ! blessings a thousand fold on the paternal heart of Pericles !

O Pericles ! how wrong are all who do not for ever follow Love, under one form or other ! There is no God but he, the framer, the preserver of the world, the pure Intelligence ! All wisdom that is not enlightened and guided by him is perturbed and perverted. He will shed, O my husband, his brightest tints over our autumnal days. Were we ever happy until now ? Ah yes, we were . . . but undeserving. A fresh fountain opens before us, subject to no droughts, would otherwise have claimed a right to vote as citizens, while their connexions were to be found among the inveterate enemies or the seceding allies of Athens. Long antecedently to the administration of Pericles, it appears that at a certain age the illegitimate were assembled at Cynosarges, in the wrestling-ring dedicated to Hercules, who himself was in that predicament : and these alone entered it. On which occasion Themistocles, his mother being a Thracian, gave the earliest proof of his astuteness, by inviting some of unmixed blood and aristocratical lineage to wrestle with him. It is far from improbable that Pericles insisted the rather on the execution of this law in opposition to Cimon, whose father, Miltiades, had married the daughter of Olorus, a prince of Thrace, and who himself was descended also from a ruler of that nation.

no overflowings. How gladly, how gratefully, do I offer to immortal Love the first libation !

Come hither, my sweet child ! come hither to my heart ! thou art man, thou art Athenian, thou art free. We are now beyond the reach, beyond the uttermost scope and vision, of Calamity.

CC.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

ALCIBIADES is grown ¹⁸ up to the highest beauty of adolescence. I think I should be enamoured of him were I a girl, and disengaged. No, Cleone ! the so easy mention of him proves to me that I never should be. He is petulant, arrogant, impetuous, and inconsistent. Pericles was always desirous that he should study oratory, in order that it might keep him at home, gratify his vanity the most perfectly and compendiously, and render him master of his own thoughts and those of others. He plainly told Pericles that he could learn little from him except dissimulation.

“ Even that,” replied Pericles, “ is useful and necessary : it proceeds from self-command. Simulation, on the contrary, is falsehood, and easily acquired by the meanest intellect. A powerful man often dissembles : he stands erect in the course of glory, with open brow but with breath suppress : the feeble mind is ready to take refuge in its poverty, under the sordid garb of whining simulation.”

He then remarked to Pericles, that his oratory was something like his economy ; ¹⁹ wanting in copiousness and display.

“ Alcibiades ! ” said my husband, “ it is particularly this part of it which I could wish you to adopt. In oratory,

[¹⁸ First ed. : “ now grown.”]

[¹⁹ “ Not that he was inattentive to his finances ; but, on the contrary, neither negligent of his paternal estate, nor yet willing to have much trouble with it ; as he had not much time to spare he brought the management of it into such a method as was very easy at the same time that it was exact. . . . This way of living was not agreeable to his sons when grown up, and the allowance he made to the women did not appear to them a generous one ; they complained of a pittance daily measured out with scrupulous economy.”—*Langhorne’s Plutarch, Pericles.*]

there are few who can afford to be frugal : in economy, there are few who can afford to act otherwise than frugally. I am a public man, and it little becomes me to leave room for suspicion that, by managing ill my own small affairs, I may be negligent in the greater of the commonwealth. There are kingdoms in Thrace and Asia, where the cares of government are consigned to ministers or satraps, and where it shall be thought honourable and glorious in one of these functionaries to die in debt after managing the treasury. But surely there is in this no proof whatever that he managed it discreetly : there²⁰ is a fair presumption that, neglecting his household, he left the community in worse disorder. Unquestionably he was a dishonest man, to incur a debt beyond the extent of his estate. Forbearance from accumulation in his own house, is hardly to be²¹ deemed a merit by the most inconsiderate, in one who can unlock the treasury to every relative, every friend, every associate, and every dependent. Such persons will generally be found to have been gamesters and prodigals, and to have entrusted the subordinate branches of public concerns to servants, as unfaithful and improvident as those menials who administered their own : and the reigns of the princes who employed them, if recorded at all, are recorded as prodigies of expenditure, profligacy, and disaster.

"Aristides died poor : but Aristides never was rich ; he threw away nothing but his good example. And was his the fault there ? He was frugal, he was provident : every action he performed, every word he uttered, will excite, inform, and direct, remotest generations. Thus indeed it cannot properly be said that, however now neglected, his example was thrown away. Like the seeds of plants which a beneficent God hath scattered throughout the earth, although many fail to come up soon after the season of their sowing,²² yet do they not decay and perish, but germinate in the sterilest soils many ages later ? Aristides will be forefather to many brave and honest men not descended from his lineage nor his

[²⁰ First ed. : "on the contrary, there." Landor may have been thinking of Fox and Sheridan.]

[²¹ First ed. : "can hardly be."]

[²² First ed. : "in the season of their sowing, or soon after."]

country: he will be founder²³ of more than nations: he will give body, vitality, and activity, to sound principles. Had he merely been a philosopher, he could effect little of this; commander as he was, imperial Persia served only for a mirror to reflect his features from Attica on the world."

Alcibiades, in several parts of this discourse, had given signs of weariness and impatience. Pericles perceived it, and reverted to Aristides. At every word that was now spoken he grew more and more animated: at the close he sprang up, seized the hand of Pericles, and told him he would listen as long as he went on in that manner.

"Speak to the purpose, as you have begun to do, and about²⁴ Aristides, and I shall like you better than Aspasia. I think, after all, I may perhaps let you be my teacher." He said this laughing.

My husband replied,

"I will not undertake it, Alcibiades! Peradventure I may offer you, from time to time, a little at once, some serviceable observations, some fruits of my experience: but it is only to grace and beauty that your restless intractable mind is obedient for an hour."

"Call me any thing, do any thing, or nothing," said the youth, "if you will only give me such a smile again."

"Go and ride into the country," said my husband, as he was rising. "If you retain your high opinion of me on your return, you will find me at leisure to continue. I leave you, for the present, with Aristides."

Away he went, without a word more to either of us. When he was out of the apartment, Pericles said, after a thoughtful and serious pause,

"He is as beautiful, playful, and uncertain, as any half-tamed young tiger, feasted and caressed on the royal carpets of Persepolis; not even Aspasia will ever quite subdue him."

[²³ First ed.: "the founder."]

[²⁴ First ed.: "all about."]

CC1.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

I SHALL never more be in fear about you, my Aspasia ! Frolicsome and giddy as you once appeared to me, at no time of your life could Alcibiades have interested your affections. You will be angry with me when I declare to you that I do not believe you ever were in love. The renown and genius of Pericles won your imagination : his preference, his fondness, his constancy, hold, and will for ever hold, your heart. The very beautiful rarely love at all. Those precious images are placed above the reach of the Passions : Time alone is permitted to efface them ; Time, the father of the Gods, and even *their* consumer.

CCII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

ANGRY ! yes, indeed, very angry am I : but let me lay all my anger in the right place. I was often jealous of your beauty, and I have told you so a thousand times. Nobody for many years ever called me so beautiful as Cleone ; and when some people did begin to call me so, I could not believe them. Few will allow the first to be first ; but the second and third are universal favourites. We are all insurgents against the despotism of excellence.

Ah Cleone ! if I could divide my happiness with you, I do think I should have much to give you. I would demand a good deal of your sound judgment for it ; but you should have it. We both of us value our beauty, I suspect, less than we used to do, which is certainly wrong ; for whatever we may be told, or may tell ourselves, we have rather a scantier store of it. However, we are not yet come to the last loaf in the citadel.

I did not see Alcibiades again, that day or the following. When he came to me, he told me he was ashamed of having said an uncivil thing.

“ Of which are you ashamed ? ” said I, “ O Alcibiades ! for there were several not distinguished for courtesy.”

“ As usual, in good humour, which always punishes me,”

said he. "But I remember I made a rude observation on what lies within your department."

"Economy?" said I.

Before he could answer me, Pericles, informed that Alcibiades had enquired for him, entered the apartment.

"I am glad you are come in," cried he; "for, although I have taken two days to collect my courage and words, I think I shall have more of both, now you are present."

He then began his apology, which Pericles thus interrupted.

"Be prepared for chastisement: I shall impose a heavy mulct on your patience. I shall render an account to you of my administration, and I hope you will permit it to pass.

"I have a son, as you know, in whose character parsimony is not among the more prominent qualities.²⁵ I am unwilling to shock him by it, which is always apt to occasion a rebound to the opposite side: and I am equally unwilling to offer an example or pretext for luxury and expense. My own character will permit neither. I never gave a splendid feast: I never gave a sparing entertainment: I never closed my dining-room to a man of elegant manners or of sound information. I have not the ample fortune of our cousin Cimon, who always used it magnificently: and glad am I that I have it not; for it would oblige me to receive many who must disgust me, and who would occupy more hours of my leisure than I can spare. My system of domestic life has produced me contentment and happiness. May yours, my dear Alcibiades, whether like it or unlike it, do the same!"

"Thank you!" said he carelessly, and added, "But your manner of speaking, which we first began to talk about, the other day, is proper only for yourself. In any other man it would be ridiculous. Were I to employ it, people would believe I assumed the character of Jupiter or Hermes walking among mortals. Aspasia's is good enough for me. Many think her language as pure and elegant as yours: and I have never known it enrage and terrify men as yours does."

"Study then Aspasia in preference," said he. "You possess already some of her advantages. A beautiful mouth

[²⁵ First ed.: "virtues." See Plutarch for an account of the ill-disposition of Xanthippus, the eldest son of Pericles.]

is always eloquent: its defects are taken for tropes and figures. Let us try together which can imitate her best. Neither of us hath ever seen her out of temper, or forgetful what argument to urge first and most forcibly. When we have much to say, the chief difficulty is to hold back some favourite thought, which presses to come on before its time, and thereby makes a confusion in the rest. If you are master of your temper, and conscious of your superiority, the words and thoughts will keep their ranks, and will come into action with all their energy, compactness, and weight. Never attempt to alter your natural tone of voice; never raise it above its pitch: let it at first be somewhat low and slow. This appears like diffidence; and men are obliged to listen the more attentively that they may hear it. Beginning with attention, they will retain it during the whole speech: but attention is with difficulty caught in the course of one.

“ I am intruding a little on the province of Aspasia. If she approves of my advice, pursue it; if she disapproves, be sure I have spoken inconsiderately, although I fancy I have observed such effects on several occasions.”

He ceased: I enforced as well as I could his admonition. But Alcibiades, with grace nearly equal, wants his gravity; and, if ever he should be his successor in the administration of the Republic, he must become so by other methods.

CCIII.

ANAXAGORAS TO ASPASIA.

PROXENUS is sailing back to Massilia. Before he left us, he collected a large cargo of *Inscriptions*, chiefly poetical. In Massilia these matters are curiosities. The people, who cannot have them fresh, are glad to accept them dry, although, according to Proxenus, they are little acute in relishing or distinguishing them.

In his last conversation with me, he gave evidence that, should he ever fail as a merchant, he hopes to make his fortune as a critic. Among his remarks was this.

“ I cannot for my life imagine why Zephyr is such a favourite with the poets.”

I answered that we Ionians were always shy of him; but

that in other parts, and especially toward Gaul and Italy, he certainly was better behaved.

“ Better behaved ! ” cried Proxenus. “ By the Twins ! he hath split my sail more than once.”

To comfort him, I replied, “ He has done that with his best friends, O Proxenus ! ”

“ And no longer ago,” continued he, “ than last Boedromion,²⁶ he carried off my nether garment that was drying upon deck.”

“ Ah ! there,” said I, “ mischievous as he is, he could not do the same to them without homicide : few of them have one to spare.”

At the recollection of his superior wealth and dignity, he grew composed again. The Gods grant him a prosperous voyage ! Ere this letter shall reach Athens, he must be almost as far as Cythera. What labours and perils do sea-faring men undergo ! What marvels are ships ! They travel in a month farther than the fleetest horse can do ; to such perfection have they been brought, and such confidence is there now in human courage and skill. As there hath been little or no improvement in them for some centuries, we may suppose that, contrary to all other inventions, the ingenuity of mortals can do nothing more for them.

I forgot to mention of Proxenus, what may-be it were better not to mention at all, that he is reported to have broken off the extremity of a leaf or two on some curious old vases, and a particle of a volute * from a small column at the corner

[²⁶ Our March.]

* One Eyles Irwin, who was not poor nor quite uneducated, tells us in his *Travels* that he broke off a volute as a *relic* from what was called *Pompey's Pillar*. This happened so lately as the last century. We are, it seems, about to remove from Egypt the obelisk named *Cleopatra's Needle*. Do we believe that Egypt is never to come to life again ? It may be some hundreds, it may be some thousands of years : but these are to the glories of Egypt as pounds are to our national debt . . . itself so glorious, and²⁷ of which the formation has constituted our glorious men ! Are we sure that the Genius who created these eternal works, derives no portion of his beatitude from the hourly contemplation of them, in the country where they were formed and fixed ?

[²⁷ First ed. : “ and which has constituted.”]

of a lane. Nothing can so distinctly prove, say the Lampsacenes, that Proxenus has a few drops of barbarian blood in him. Genuine Greeks may travel through all the world, and see every vase, every column, every statue, worth seeing in its whole circumference, without a thought of mutilation. Those people who cannot keep their hands from violating the purest works of ancient days, ought, if there are not too many of them, to be confined in separate cages, among the untameable specimens of zoology.

The Lampsacenes, you see by this, are not averse to protect the Arts.

CCIV.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

I HAVE found eight verses, of which I send you only the four last. So entirely do they express what I have felt, it seems as if I myself had composed them.

They who tell us that love and grief are without fancy and invention, never knew invention and fancy, never felt grief and love.

The thorns that pierce most deep are prest
Only the closer to the breast :
To dwell on them is now relief,
And tears alone are balm to grief !

You perhaps will like these better, Aspasia ! though very unlike in sentiment and expression.

1.

Pyrrha ! your smiles are gleams of sun
That after one another run
Incessantly, and think it fun.

2.

Pyrrha ! your tears are short sweet rain
That glimmering on the flower-lit plain
Zephyrs kiss back to heaven again.

3.

Pyrrha ! both anguish me : do please
To shed but (if you wish me ease)
Twenty of those, and two of these.

ccv.

ANAXAGORAS TO ASPASIA.

SHIPS are passing and repassing through the Hellespont, all hours of the day ; some of them from the Piræus, urging the allies of Athens to come forward in her defence ; others from the Peloponese, inciting them to rise up in arms, and at once to throw off allegiance.

Would there be half this solicitude in either of the belligerents to be virtuous and happy, supposing it possible to persuade the one or the other that she might be, and without an effort ? supposing it, in other words, to be quite as easy and pleasant to receive a truth as an untruth. Would these mariners and soldiers, and those statesmen who send them out, exert half the anxiety, half the energy and prowess, to extinguish the conflagration of a friend's house in the neighbourhood, as they are exerting now to lay in ashes all the habitations that lie beyond it ? And such are brave men, such are wise men, such are the rulers of the world ! Well hath it been said by some old poet,

Men let themselves slide onward by degrees
 Into the depths of madness ; one bold spring
 Back from the verge, had saved them . . . but it seems
 There dwells rare joy within it !

O thou Sire
 Of Gods and mortals, let the blighting cloud
 Pass over me ! O grant me wholesome rest
 And innocent uprisings, although call'd
 The only madman on thy reeling earth !

CCVI.

ANAXAGORAS TO ASPASIA.

IT is well that you are removed from the city, and that the enemies of Athens pay respect either to your birth-place or your wisdom, either to your celebrity or your confidence. I remember that, speaking of the human form and countenance,

both as existing in life and represented in the ideal, you remarked that the perfection of beauty is what is farthest from all similitude to the brutes. Surely then, in like manner, the perfection of our moral nature is in our remoteness from all similitude to their propensities. Now the worst propensity of the worst beasts is bloodshed, for which we pursue them as nearly as we can to extermination, but which they never commit with so little urgency, or to so great an extent, as we do. Until we bring ourselves at least to an equality with them, we can hardly be said to have made much progress in wisdom. It will appear wonderful, and perhaps incredible, to future generations, that what are now considered the two highest gifts of man, oratory and poetry, should be employed, the one chiefly in exciting, the other in emblazoning, deeds of slaughter and devastation. If we could see, in the nature of things, a child capable of forming a live tiger, and found him exercising his power of doing it, I think we should say to him,

You might employ your time better, child!

But then, Aspasia, we must not be orators nor poets, nor hope for any estimation in the state. Beware how you divulge this odd opinion ; or you may be accused, as before, of crimes against the purity of morals, against the customs of our fore-fathers, and against the established and due veneration of the Gods. I hardly know what I am treading on, when I make a single step toward philosophy. On sand I fear it is ; and, whether the impression be shallow or profound, the eternal tide of human passions will cover and efface it. There are many who would be vexed and angry at this, and would say, in the bitterness of their hearts, that they have spent their time in vain. Aspasia ! Aspasia ! they have indeed, if they are angry or vexed about it.

CCVII.²⁸

ANAXAGORAS TO ASPASIA.

Did I tell you, O Aspasia, we were free and remote from the calamities of war ? We were. The flute and the timbrel

[²⁸ In the 1st ed. this letter follows CCX.]

and the harp alone were heard along our streets ; and the pavement was bestrewn with cistus and lavender and myrtle, which grow profusely on the rocks behind us. Melanthos had arrived from the Chersonese to marry Eurykleia ; and his friend Sosigenes of Corinth ²⁹ had determined to be united on the same day with her sister Phanera.

Those who have seen them say that they were the prettiest girls in the city : they were also the happiest ; but less happy than their lovers, who however owed at present but a part of the happiness to either. They were sworn friends from early youth, and had not met since, but always had corresponded.

Why cannot men draw a line against war as against plague, and shut up the infected ? Instead of which, they are proud of being like the dogs in the worst feature ; rushing forth into every affray, and taking part in it instantly with equal animosity. I wish we had arrived at such a degree of docility, and had advanced so many steps in improvement, that by degrees we might hope to acquire anything better of these good creatures. We have the worst of every beast, and the best of none.

This is not, O Aspasia ! my usual tone of thinking and discoursing : nor is what has happened here among the usual occurrences of my life. The generous heart needs little to be reminded what are the embraces of young and ardent friends ; and the withered one could ill represent them.

Eurykleia, in the silence of fondness, in the fulness of content, was holding the hand of her Melanthos. Love has few moments more sweet, Philosophy none more calm. That moment was interrupted by the entrance of Sosigenes ; and composure was exchanged for rapture by the friendly soul of Melanthos. Yes, yes, Aspasia ! friendship, even in the young, may be more animated than love itself. It was not long, however.

“ Where is Phanera ? ”

“ I will call her,” said Eurykleia, and went out.

Phanera,³⁰ fond of ornament, it may be, and ambitious to

[²⁹ Not in 1st ed.]

[³⁰ First ed. : “ Phanera, whether fond of ornament, I know not.”]

surpass her sister and enchant her lover, came not speedily, nor indeed did Eurykleia very soon, for it was not at first that she could find her. Conversation had begun in the meanwhile about the war. Melanthos was a little more vehement than the mildness of his nature, it is said, ever allowed him before, and blamed the Corinthians for inciting so many states to hostility. Often had Sosigenes been looking toward the door, expecting his Phanera, and now began to grow impatient. The words of Melanthos, who felt the cruelty of war chiefly because it would separate the two sisters and the two friends, touched the pride of Sosigenes. Unable to moderate his temper, now excited by the absence of Phanera after the sister had some time returned, he said fiercely,

“It is well to blame the citizens of the noblest city upon earth, for not enduring an indignity. It is well ; but in slaves alone, or viler dependents !”

“Sosigenes ! Sosigenes !” cried Melanthos, starting up and rushing toward him. At that instant the impetuous Sosigenes, believing violence was about to follow affront, struck him with his dagger to the heart.

“I could not then calm thy anger with an ⁸¹ embrace ! my ⁸² too unhappy friend !” while the blood gurgled through the words, sobbed forth Melanthos.

CCVIII.³⁸

ALCIBIADES TO PERICLES.

You commanded me, O Pericles, that I should write to you, whenever I found an opportunity on land. Phormio ⁸⁴ cast anchor before Naupactus : we command the Gulf of Crissa, and check the movements of the Corinthians. The business of blockading is little to my mind. Writing is almost as insufferable : it is the only thing I do not willingly undertake when my friends desire it. Beside, I have nothing in the world to

[⁸¹ First ed. : “my.”]

[⁸² First ed. : “O.”]

[⁸³ In the 1st ed. this letter follows CCXII.]

[⁸⁴ Phormio, one of the best of the Athenian generals, was a man of a rough and hardy character. Aristophanes alludes to him as delighting in the hardships of war.]

write about. We have done little but sink a few vessels and burn a few villages. It is really a hard matter to find a table to write upon, so quick and so complete is the devastation. I fancied war had something in it more animating and splendid. The people of the Peloponese are brave, however. They sometimes ask for their children (if very young), but never for their lives. Why cannot we think them as little worth taking as they of giving?

I am heartily tired of this warfare; and Phormio has told me, in plain words, he is heartily tired of *me*. Upon this, I requested his permission to join without delay our army before Potidaea. I expected not only an uncivil refusal, but a sharp rebuke.

“The Gods have begun to favour us!” cried Phormio. “This offer is better than the luckiest omen. Alcibiades! thou art the whitest of white birds; and thy flight, whichever wind it float upon, is worth a victory.”

I would have been angry; but laughter sprang uppermost; so, throwing my arms round old Phormio’s neck, I almost pulled him down with it.

“How now, stripling!” cried he, as willing to be angry as I was, “All this buffoonery before the commander of the fleet!”

CCIX.

ALCIBIADES TO PERICLES.

HARDLY could it have been expected that *the whitest of white birds* should have been so speedily on the wing. The day had not closed when Phormio told me, that, knowing my fickleness, he had given orders for my voyage back. Every voyage is prosperous that brings me within sight of an enemy worth seeing. Brave fellows these Potidaeans! They never lose their appetite, even in the greatest want of air and exercise. You, who hear every thing, must know that they eat one another, rather than surrender. I have been but three days in the camp, where, to my delight, I found the brave and kindly Socrates. Do you disapprove of my renewing my intimacy with Philosophy in the midst of battles? Let Philosophy

then stand aside ; and behold in her place the defender of his country and the saviour of his friend.

The morning after my arrival, the Potidæans burst forth with incredible bravery from their gates, overthrowing all opposition. Now was my time. The heavy-armed in general, being old soldiers, were somewhat slower ; and many of the enemy were assailing me when they came up : nor indeed was it then in sufficient force. I was wounded and overthrown, and, at the beginning, stunned : but presently I fancied I heard the sound of a brisk sword on armour over me, and felt something heavy fall on my legs. I was drawn forcibly from under the last of my antagonists. Socrates³⁵ raised me up, and defended me from the weapons of not a few, unwilling to retire and irresolute to renew the engagement.

I write now, because I am so wounded I can do nothing else.

CCX.

PERICLES TO ALCIBIADES.

You are courageous, my Alcibiades, to a degree which I hardly ever observed in another. This alone induces me to doubt whether you will become, as soon as we both of us wish it, an accomplished and perfect soldier. To rush against the enemy before your comrades, is not indeed quite so unseemly as to lag behind ; yet it may be even more detrimental in an officer. With old troops, who know their duty, it is always so : with younger alone, who want encouragement, it may not be. Socrates³⁶ deserved the first honours in the action : his modesty and his affection transferred them to the imprudent

[³⁵ “He took care to train his limbs by exercise, and was a strong man. He fought in the expedition to Amphipolis and at the battle of Delium he rescued Xenophon, who had fallen off his horse ; and when all the rest of the Athenians were in full flight, he retired quietly, turning round calmly and ready to resist any attack.”—*Diog. Laert., Socrates.*]

[³⁶ “He also was in the war at Potidæa as a sailor ; for there was no room for employing infantry there . . . and though he displayed much valour there, he surrendered the prize of valour to Alcibiades.”—*Diog. Laert., Socrates.*]

and the vanquished, whom he rescued from the shame of rashness and the wretchedness of captivity. With all my fondness for you, I could not have given you my vote ; and had I commanded against Potidæa, I must have reproved you in presence of the army.

Never, O Alcibiades, inflict on me the misery of passing so severe a sentence. I praised you before others did ; I condemn you after them. Your high spirit deserved its reward ; your temerity its rebuke. I, who have been the careful guardian of your fortune, am the more anxious one of your safety and of your fame. In my former letter I gave unobstructed way to the more pleasurable emotions : and, in every one that I shall have occasion to write to you hereafter, I am confident of the same enjoyment. Reply ⁸⁷ to me as your friend, your comrade, the partaker of your pains and pleasures, and at most the director of your studies. But here, my Alcibiades, we must be grave and serious : I must, for once, not guide, but dictate : no answer is here admissible, excepting the answer of a soldier to his general.

CCXI.⁸⁸

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

You know that to Niconœ was awarded by her judge Priapos the prize of beauty in the Kallisteia. In return for this favourable decision she dedicated to him a golden ewer and a fawn-skin. Under his image a poet, who perhaps was her admirer, and who was grateful to the arbiter, wrote this epigram :—

Niconœ is inclined to deck
Thy ruddy shoulder and thick neck
With her own fawn-skin, Lampsacene !
Beside, she brings a golden ewer
To cool thy hands in, very sure
Among what herbage they have been.

Ah ! Thou hast wicked leering eyes,
And any maiden were unwise
Who should invest thee face to face ;
Therefore she does it from behind,
And blesses thee so just and kind
In giving her the prize for grace.

[⁸⁷ First ed. : "Reply to me, in those."]

[⁸⁸ Not in 1st. ed.]

Here are some others, I believe by Erinna herself, but I find inscribed on them *Addressed to Erinna*.

Ay, shun the dance and shun the grape,
Erinna ! thou shalt not escape.
Idle the musing maid who thinks
To lie unseen by sharp-eyed lynx
Where Bacchus, God of joy and truth,
Hunts with him, hunts for bashful youth.
So take the Thyrus, if you please,
And come and join the Moenades.

CCXII.³⁹

ANAXAGORAS TO ASPASIA.

WE are now so near winter that there may not be, after the vessel which is about to sail, any more of them bound for Athens, all the remainder of the year. And who knows what another may bring or take away ?

I remain in health, but feeble. Life slips from me softly and imperceptibly. I am unwilling to tire myself by blowing a fire which must soon go out, whether I blow it or not. Had I any species of curiosity to send you, were it pebble, sea-weed, or new book, I would send it ; not (for it is idle to talk so) as a memorial of me. If the friend is likely to be forgotten, can we believe that any thing he has about him will repose a longer time on the memory ?

Thus far had I written, when my strength failed me. Stesicles and Apollodorus have told me I must prepare for a voyage. The passage⁴⁰ is neither so broad nor so stormy as the Hellespont.

I was resolved not to go until I had looked in my garden for some anemones, which I recollect to have seen blossoming the other day. It occurred to me that usually they appear in spring : so does poetry. I will present to you a little of both ; for the first time. They are of equal value ; and are

[³⁹ In the 1st ed. this letter follows CCVI.]

[⁴⁰ In the 1st ed. the word is "shore ;" probably an error. "The chief men of Lampsacus enquired of him what he would wish to be done for him, and Anaxagoras made answer that he desired that the children of Lampsacus should have leave to play each year during the month in which he might chance to die."—*Diod. Laert. Anaxagoras.*]

worth about as much as the pebble, or the sea-weed, or the new book.

Where are the blooms of many dyes
That used in every path to rise?
Whither are gone the lighter hours?
What leave they? . . . I can only send
My wisest, loveliest, latest friend
These weather-worn and formless flowers.

Think me happy that I am away from Athens; I, who always lose my composure in the presence of crime or calamity. If any one should note to you my singularities, remembering me a year hence, as I trust you and Pericles will do, add to them, but not aloud, a singularity of felicity, "*He neither lived nor died with the multitude.*" There are however some Clazomenians who know that Anaxagoras was of Clazomenai.

CCXIII.⁴¹

ALCIBIADES TO PERICLES.

PERICLES! I did wrong and rashly. The praises of the Athenians are to me as the hum of insects: they linger in my ear, but are senseless and unexciting. I swear to you I will do better, but I must see you before I go.

Aspasia, whose letter you have sent me since, is even more severe than you have been; and she has neither right nor reason. She is the only woman upon earth that ever railed at rashness, the only one that could distinguish it from fortitude. But every man must be rash once: it saves him from as much inconvenience and mischief as being oftener rash would incur.

Do not consider this nonsense as vindication or reply: let it not stand in the way of your pardon.

CCXIV.

ASPASIA TO ALCIBIADES.

ARE you not ashamed, young man, to leave the aged behind you, with all their wounds, merely to show how dexterous you are become in the management of your sword? Unworthy

[⁴¹ In the 1st ed. this letter follows CCVII.]

Alcibiades ! Never ⁴² expect that the Athenians, whatever be ⁴³ their levity and inconsiderateness, will award to you the honour of superiority in valour. Socrates well deserved it ; not for saving a life which on the next occasion will be thrown away, but for giving to every one capable of profiting by it, an example of steadiness and constancy. Pericles, I hope, will not allow you to disembark, until you have acquired the rudiments of discipline, in the only art in which you ever seemed likely to excell. Have you forgotten too that the pestilence is raging in the city ? O rash Alcibiades ! the sight of Pericles himself, to you at least, could hardly have been worth so desperate a hazard. But Pericles will reprove you, confident boy ! Let me hear no more of you until I have heard that he has granted you his forgiveness.

CCXV.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

CENSURE not too severely, O my Pericles, your inconsiderate cousin ! In these days, when so many of your adherents are fallen, some by the fever, some by war, we must be parsimonious in the treasury of friendship, at all times far from inexhaustible.

A hundred men of more wisdom and more virtue than Alcibiades would prevail much less with the multitude, should any thing sinister befall you. May the Gods avert it ! but, I always fear something ; and, what certainly is more foolish, I fancy my presence could avert from you any calamity. I wish I were persuaded that the Immortals hear us : I would then so perpetually pray for you as hardly to give myself time to read your letters ; and you should quarrel with the shortness of mine. But reason, which strengthens our religion, weakens our devotion. Happy are those who have retained throughout life their infantine simplicity, which nurses a tractable idol in an unsuspecting bosom, is assured it knows and heeds the voice addressing it, and shuts it up again with a throb of joy, and keeps it warm. For this, the mind must be matured to the last with the same milky food as in childhood ; the Gods

[⁴² First ed. : " Do not."]

[⁴³ First ed. : " with all their levity."]

must have their tangible images, and must laugh to us out of ivy and flowers.

Thinking of you, I had forgotten that I began to write in favour of Alcibiades. Lest, by taxing⁴⁴ him with impetuosity and imprudence, you should alienate his fickle mind, I myself have written to him with quite enough severity. At least I think so: you shall judge for yourself. When you have perused it, let it go to him instantly; for here we are uncertain at what point the troops will land from Potidæa. I shall be grieved if any thing happens to him. He has more life in him than is enough to animate a city; yet the point of an arrow may extinguish it in an instant. With however long experience before us, we yet might wonder that what is so animated should ever cease at all. You men often talk of glorious death, of death met bravely for your country. I too have been warmed by the bright idea in oratory and poetry; but ah! my dear Pericles! I would rather read it on an ancient tomb than on a recent one.

CCXVI.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

I HAD already warned Alcibiades of his imprudence and irregularity; but your⁴⁵ letter will ensure his correction. The reply he sent me is worthy of a man formed for command. We must watch over him: he will do great good or great evil. Those who are most capable of both, always end miserably; for, although they may have done many things well, yet the first or second that they do badly is their ruin. They know not whom to choose as their follower up the scaling ladder, nor when to loosen their grasp of the pinnacle. Intractable as you may think Alcibiades, there is not a youth in Athens so easily led away by a weaker judgment than his own. He wishes to excell in every thing, and succeeds: but this wish brings him into contact with too many; and he cannot at present push them off far enough from him to see

[⁴⁴ First ed.: "tasking."]

[⁴⁵ First ed.: "Your."]

plainly and distinctly what they are. He will soon stand above them and know them better.

I must leave off: the dying call me forth. Blessings on my Aspasia, and her little Athenian!

CCXVII.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

THE verses I shall presently write out for you, at the bottom of my letter, are composed, as you will perceive, in the broadest Dorian, on the extraordinary depth, of *Æschylus*. Probably the unhappy poet was murdered by some enemy or some robber. He was found with his skull fractured, and, it may be, with a tortoise near him. But who in the world can believe that an eagle dropped it from above? that the quickest in sight of all animals mistook a bald head for a rock? And did ever man walk in the fields of Sicily with his head uncovered? If he did, his death might easily be accounted for, without a tortoise or eagle: a sunbeam ⁴⁶ is stronger and surer. Whenever I find a book containing this gross absurdity, I instantly throw it aside, as the effusion of an idle and silly writer, and am well assured it must be incapable of instructing or interesting me.

The petulant author of the verses you will find below, is evidently a disappointed poet. Hiero and Theron would never treat *Æschylus* with neglect or with indifference. Little as may be our regard and our respect for royalty, we hardly can suppose any king, who knows Greek, so barbarous and stupid, as to fancy in himself a nobility more exalted than in *Æschylus*, or gifted by the Gods, with a higher office, than stewardship to the greatest of men among whom he himself is the richest.

1.

Bard of Eleusis! art thou dead
So strangely! can it be
An eagle dropt upon thy head
A tortoise! no, not he.

[⁴⁶ The words "a sunbeam is stronger and surer" do not occur in 1st ed. All ancient writers on the subject give the account of the death of *Æschylus*, which Landor ridicules, perhaps correctly.]

2.

They who devised the fable, marr'd
 The moral of their song :
 They meant the eagle by the bard,
 But placed the creature wrong.

3.

Quickest in courts those ever move
 Whom nature made so slow :
 Tortoise wears plumes and springs above
 While eagle moults below.⁴⁷

I have room enough for another short piece which carries with it somewhat more than the dialect for a testimonial of its atticism. They who are ill-trained in the course of poetry, puff and blow, as the trainers express it, at short distances : They who are trained better, move with little difficulty, and no appearance of exertion. Strength does not lie in varicose veins. This is, however, a subject which requires grace only. You like to drink water; but you like to drink it from a silver cup.

TO LOVE.

Where is my heart, perfidious boy ?
 Give it, O give it, back again !
 I ask no more for hours of joy ;
 Lift but thy hand and burst my chain.

LOVE'S REPLY.

Fond man ! the heart we rashly gave
 She values not, yet won't restore :
 She passes on from slave to slave ;
 Go, go ; thy heart is thine no more.

CCXVIII.⁴⁸

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

THE Athenians, my dear Aspasia, are reported to be a religious people ; yet I have often wondered at their freedom and boldness, in depriving the immortal Gods of their power

[⁴⁷ In 1st ed. this letter ends here.]

[⁴⁸ Not in 1st ed.]

on some occasions, and on others in accosting them with familiarity and disrespect. It would have been satisfactory to me if you had related what befell the unhappy man who presumed to call perfidious and boy one of the most powerful. Certainly we are inspired by our holy religion to believe that Love is youthful: but Anacreon is the only poet who represents him as a child. There is an absurdity in making him appear younger than we ourselves are when we begin to be under the influence of the passion. But the graver fault is in calling him (what I tremble to write) perfidious! You will relieve my mind of some anxiety by assuring me that nothing sinister has befallen so captious and irreverential a votary. If his fault is recent, and if he is yet living, it would be wise and considerate in him to implore the blessed mother of this almighty deity, that she may be pleased to avert his anger should he not have forgotten the offence. I say it, because the most experienced and the most pious are of opinion that he is oftener oblivious. Was not he both wiser and more pious who wrote a poem in a very different spirit, and, whether more or less attic, fuller of thought, consistency, and reflection? If you have forgotten it, let me bring it back again, and fix it as firmly as may be in your memory:

Ah! what a blessed privilege it is
To stand upon this insulated rock
On the north side of youth! I see below
Many at labour, many at a game
Than labour more laborious, wanting breath
And crying help! What now! what vexes them?
Only a laughing maid and winged boy,
Obstinate boy indeed, who will not shoot
His other arrow, having shot the first.
Where is the harm in this? yet they meanwhile
Make all the air about them pant with sobs,
And with one name weary poor Echo down.

Aspasia! I too have suffered; and Love knows it: yet I dare not even tell him that he knows it. To remind him would be indelicate; to complain would be irreligious. And what could all his power do for me now? But this, believe me, is not the reason why I endure in silence, and bend in submission to the arbitrement of the Gods. Surely, too surely,

who ever has breathed has sighed. When we have lost, O Aspasia, those we love, whether by impassable distance or any other dispensation of the Gods, youth is less happy than age, and age than death.

CCXIX.⁴⁹

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

YOUTH, like the aloe, blossoms but once, and its flower springs from amidst the thorns : but see with what great strength and to what height the aloe-flower rises over them : be not surpassed by it.

On love, on grief, on every human thing,
Time sprinkles Lethe's water with his wing.

If I continue to reason, or to moralize, or to versify, you will begin to doubt my sincerity, or at least the warmth of my affection. I am induced to believe, O Cleone, that the deity you venerate so profoundly and solemnly is far from unforgiving. In the verses I now send you there appears to be a proof of it ; for the writer seems to have treated him not only as a child, but a child much addicted to mischief ; yet never was man treated in return with more benignity. I should tremble at the manner in which the fates are mentioned, if matters were left at their arbitration. But we know the contrary : we know positively that they can spin only what is on their distaffs, and not a thread can be turned to a new pattern.

I would be grave, Cleone ! I would indeed : but really there is no harm in laughing at children and old women, Gods or not. We know they have a good deal to do in the affairs of this world, however ; and it is unwise to laugh at those who are as capable of extinguishing our laughter as of exciting it.

“ What art thou doing with those shears ? ”
I shouted in an urchin's ears,
Who notched them and who made them grate,

[⁴⁹ Not in 1st ed.]

While three old women near him sate,
 And scowled at every scratch they heard,
 But never said a single word.
 In a dark corner thus all three
 Sate with an elbow on the knee,
 And three blue fingers held their tips
 Impressed on three still bluer lips,
 Although the froward boy I chid
 Did not (boys will not) what was bid,
 His countenance was not malign
 As that was of the elder trine.
 "Look at those frightful ones," he said,
 And each one shook her thin hair'd head.
 "Nay, never fear the angry crones,"
 Said he ; and each replied with groans.
 "They are all vicious ; for they knew
 That what I did I did for you,
 Contemplating the fairest maid
 That ever with my bow has played.
 Crones ! By my help your shears have got
 A set of teeth, which you have not.
 Come ! come ! death's bridesmaid ! snip as fast
 As snip ye may, her years shall last
 In spite of you, her beauty bloom
 On this side and beyond the tomb :
 I swear by Styx."

"And I by thee,"
 Cried I, "that what thou say'st shall be."

CCXX.

ALCIBIADES TO PERICLES.

PRAY why did you tell Phanomachos to station some confidential one near me who should be an eternal check on me ? There is little chance that I should do any thing extravagant, unless the Potidæans invite me to dinner and I accept the invitation. I will not allow any man to defend me before I stand in need of defence, and before I have deserved to save my life by proving it worth something. I should quarrel with Socrates himself, much more with another, presuming to take what belongs to me, of danger or of glory. It is not kind in you, nor open, nor prudent. Would you wish any one to say, "Pericles takes care of his own relatives ! " This ought only

to be said of the vilest men in the worst governments ; and of you until now it never could be. You have given no such orders in regard to Xanthippos. He may be as rash and violent as he pleases. Even here he dares to call me *Neaniskos* and *Kouridion* and *Ta paidika*.* By Castor ! if he were not the son of Pericles, his being my cousin should not save from a stroke of the sabre that fierce disdainful visage. I promise you it shall soon be seen which of us is the braver and the better man. I would not say this to you unless that you might let him know my sentiments. I have no words, written or spoken, for the contumelious : my complaints are for the ear of those only who are kind to me.

CCXI.

PERICLES TO ALCIBIADES.

Do not think, my Alcibiades, that I recommended you to the guardianship of Phanomachos, in order that he should exercise over you a troublesome vigilance of controul, or indulge toward you an unmilitary partiality. But I am more intimate with him than I am with Xenophon or Aristocles or Hestiodoros ; † and having sons, he knows that restraints are often necessary on the impatience of military ardour.

Your letter is a proof that I judged rightly. My praises of your valour are lost amid those of the army and of the city ; but the delight it has given me is, I am confident, one among the thoughts that have assuaged your wounds. On your return, the citizens will express their sense of your conduct.

Endeavour to prove, now that you are acknowledged to be the first in bravery, that you are more discreet than Xanthippos. Many in every army are so nearly on an equality in courage, that any attempt of theirs to show a superiority is ineffectual. Unbecoming language can neither prove nor disprove it, but must detract from its worth and merit. Discretion, on the contrary, is the sure sign of that presence of mind without

* This expression was usually reproachful ; not always ; as we see in Plato.

† These three were appointed to commands with Phanomachos.

which valour strikes untimely and impotently. Judgment alone makes courage available, and conciliates power with genius. Consider that you never will have attained the scope of your ambition, until you lead and govern those men against whom your passions now exasperate you: and, unless you do conciliate them, you never can induce them to acknowledge your superiority, much less submit to your governance. It is best the germs of power should spring forth early, that they may have time enough for gaining strength: therefore I write to you, no longer as a youth in pupilage, but as a candidate for the highest offices of the commonwealth.

Try whether your forbearance may not produce a better effect on Xanthippos than my remonstrances. I write to you rather than to him, because I rely more firmly on your affection. Be worthy of such a secret, O Alcibiades! and think how highly I must esteem your prudence and manliness, when I delegate to you, who are the younger, the power of correcting in him the faults which I have been unable to eradicate or suppress. Go, and, in the spirit with which I send it, give my love to Xanthippos. He may neglect it, he may despise it, he may cast it away, but I will gather it all up again for him: you must help me.

CCXXII.

ALCIBIADES TO PERICLES.

PERICLES, I was much edified by your letter; but, pardon me, when I came to the close of it I thought you rather mad.

“What!” said I, “beard this panther!”

However, when I considered a little more and a little better on it, I went to him and delivered your love. He stared at me, and then desired to see the direction. “Ay,” said he, “I remember the handwriting. He oftener writes to me than I to him. I suppose he has less to do and less to think of.”

The few other words he added are hardly worth the trouble of repetition. In fact, they were not very filial. Dear Pericles! I would love him, were it only out of perversity. But, beside all other rights over me, you have made me more

disposed than ever to obey you, in making me more contented with myself, as you have by this commission. I may do something yet, if we can but fumigate or pray away the plague. Of two thousand four hundred soldiers, who landed but forty days before me, from the Bosphorus, under the command of Agnon, son of Nikias, one thousand and fifty are already dead. I shall have nobody to persuade or manage, or even to fight with, if we go on so.

CCXXXIII.

ALCIBIADES TO PERICLES.

POTIDEA has surrendered. The dead of the city are scarcely more shadows than the living, and yet how bravely they fought to the last. I should have been sorry for them a few months ago ; but I have now learned what it is to be a soldier. We must rise superior to pain, and then take another flight, farther afield, and rise superior to pity. Besides, the Potidæans were traitors ; and next, they were against us : and furthermore, they were so wicked as to eat one another, rather than submit. This shows their malice. Now we have done nothing half so bad toward them ; and I assure you, if others are disposed to such cruelty, I will take no part in it. For who would ever kiss me afterward ?

CCXXXIV.

PERICLES TO ALCIBIADES.

THE remembrance of past days that were happy, increases the gloominess of those that are not, and intercepts the benefits of those that would be.

In the midst of the plague this reflection strikes me, on the intelligence I have received from Lampsacus. You likewise will be sorry, O Alcibiades, to hear that Anaxagoras is dying. Although he seldom conversed with you, and seldom commended you in private, yet, believe me, he never omitted an occasion of pointing out to your friends any sign you had manifested of ability or virtue. He declined the character of

teacher, yet few have taught so much, wherever his wisdom was accessible. Philosophers there have been indeed, at Athens and elsewhere, earnest in the discovery and in the dissemination of truth ; but, excepting Thales⁵⁰ and Pherecydes, none among them has been free from ostentation, or from desire of obtaining the absolute and exclusive possession of weak and ductile minds. Now the desire of great influence over others is praiseworthy only where great good to the community may arise from it. To domineer in the arbitrary sway of a dogmatical and grasping, yet loose and empty-handed philosophy, which never bears upon inventions and uses, nor elevates nor tranquillises the mind ; and to look upon ourselves with a sweet complacency from so petty an eminence, is worse than boyish ambition. To call idlers and stragglers to us, and to sit among them and regale on their wonder, is the selfishness of an indigent and ill-appointed mind. Anaxagoras was subject to none of these weaknesses, nor to the greater of condescending to reprove, or to argue with, those who are. He made every due allowance for our infirmities of understanding, and variations of temper, the effect of them ; and he was no less friendly toward those who differed widely in opinion from him, than toward those who quite agreed. When a friend of his was admiring and praising him for it, he interrupted him, saying,

“ Why not ? Is it not too self-evident for language, that, if I had taken the same road, I should have gone in the same direction ? and would not the same direction have led to the same conclusion ? ”

Yes, Alcibiades ! it is indeed self-evident, and, were it spoken unwarily, it would be reprehended for being so : and yet scarcely one man in ten millions acts consistently upon it.

There are humanities, my friend, which require our perpetual recollection, and are needful to compensate, in some measure, for those many others we must resign, to the necessities and exactions of war.

[⁵⁰ Diogenes Laertius gives in his life of Thales a letter written by him to Pherecydes asking to be allowed to see his forthcoming book and offering to visit him.]

CCXXV.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

SERENE and beautiful are our autumnal days in Thessaly. We have many woods about us, and many woodland sounds among them. In this season of the year I am more inclined to poetry than in any other ; and I want it now more than ever to flow among my thoughts, and to bear up the heavier.

I hesitate, O Cleone, to send you what I have been writing. You will say it is a strange fancy of mine, and fitter for me in those earlier hours of life, when we were reposing in the Island.

Nothing, I must confess, would be more ill-placed than a *Drama* or *Dialogue* in the world below ; at least if the Shades entered into captious disquisitions or frivolous pleasantries. But we believe that our affections outlive us, and that Love is not a stranger in Elysium. Humours, the idioms of life, are lost in the transition, or are generalized in the concourse and convergency of innumerable races : passions, the universal speech, are throughout intelligible.

The Genius of Homer is never to be gainsaid by us : and he shews us how heroes, and women worthy of heroes, felt and reasoned. A long dialogue, a formal drama, would be insupportable : but perhaps a single scene may win attention and favour from my own Cleone.

I imagine then Agamemnon to descend from his horrible death, and to meet instantly his daughter. By the nature of things, by the suddenness of the event, Iphigeneia can have heard nothing of her mother's double crime, adultery and murder.

I suspend my pen. Although I promised you, in the morning, my short Acherusian scene, I am almost ready to retract my words. Everybody has found out that I am deficient in tenderness. While I was writing, I could not but shed tears . . . just as priests do libations, you will say, to save other people the trouble.

THE SHADES OF AGAMEMNON AND OF
IPHIGENEIA.¹

IPHIGENEIA.

Father ! I now may lean upon your breast,
And you with unreverted eyes will grasp
Iphigeneia's hand.

We are not shades
Surely ! for yours throbs yet.

And did my blood

Win Troy for Greece ?

Ah ! 'twas ill done, to shrink ;
But the sword gleam'd so sharp ; and the good priest
Trembled, and Pallas frown'd above, severe.

AGAMEMNON.

Daughter !

IPHIGENEIA.

Beloved father ! is ² the blade
Again to pierce my bosom ? 'tis unfit
For sacrifice ; no blood is in its veins,
No God requires it here ; here are no wrongs
To vindicate, no realms to overthrow.
You standing as at Aulis in the fane,
With face averted, holding (as before)
My hand ; but yours burns not, as then it burn'd ;
This alone shews me we are with the Blest,
Nor subject to the sufferings we have borne.
I will win back past kindness.

Tell me then,
Tell how my mother fares who loved me so,
And griev'd, as 'twere for you, to see me part.
Frown not, but pardon me for tarrying
Amid too idle words, nor asking how
She prais'd us both (which most ?) for what we did.

[¹ From eve to morn, from morn to parting night,
Father and daughter stood before my sight.
I felt the looks they gave, the words they said,
And reconducted each serener shade.
Ever shall these to me be well spent days,
Sweet fell the tears upon them, sweet the praise.
Far from the footstool of the tragic throne,
I am tragedian in this scene alone.

Landor's Satire on Satirists (1837), p. 23.]

[² First ed. : " Is the blade Again to pierce a bosom now unfit For
sacrifice ? "]

AGAMEMNON.

Ye Gods who govern here! do human pangs
Reach the pure soul thus far below? do tears
Spring in these meadows?

IPHIGENEIA.

No, sweet father, no . . .
I could have answered that; why ask the Gods?

AGAMEMNON.

Iphigeneia! O my child! the Earth
Has gendered crimes unheard-of heretofore,
And Nature may have changed in her last depths,
Together with the Gods and all their laws.

IPHIGENEIA.

Father! we must not let you here condemn;
Not, were the day less joyful: recollect
We have no wicked here; no king to judge.
Poseidon, we have heard, with bitter rage
Lashes his foaming steeds against the skies,
And, laughing with loud yell at winged fire,
Innoxious to his fields and palaces
Affrights the eagle from the sceptred hand;
While Pluto, gentlest brother of the three
And happiest in obedience, views sedate
His tranquil realm, nor envies theirs above.
No change have we, not even day for night
Nor spring for summer.

All things are serene,
Serene too be your spirit! None on earth
Ever was half so kindly in his house,
And so compliant, even to a child.
Never was snatch'd your robe away from me,
Though going to the council. The blind man
Knew his good king was leading himindoors,
Before he heard the voice that marshal'd Greece.
Therefore all prais'd you.

Proudest men themselves
In others praise humility, and most
Admire it in the sceptre and the sword.
What then can make you speak thus rapidly
And briefly? in your step thus hesitate?
Are you afraid to meet among the good
Incestuous Helen here?

AGAMEMNON.

Oh! Gods of Hell!

IPHIGENEIA.

She hath not past the river.
We may walk
With our hands link'd nor feel our house's shame.

AGAMEMNON.

Never mayst thou, Iphigeneia ! feel it !
Aulis had no sharp sword, thou wouldest exclaim,
Greece no avenger . . . I, her chief so late,
Through Erebus, through Elysium, writhe beneath it.

IPHIGENEIA.

Come ; I have better diadems than those
Of Argos and Mycenai . . . come away,
And I will weave them for you on the bank.
You will not look so pale when you have walked
A little in the grove, and have told all
Those sweet fond words the widow sent her child.

AGAMEMNON.

Oh Earth ! I suffered less upon thy shores !

(*Aside.*)

The bath that bubbled with my blood, the blows
That spilt it (O worse torture) must she know ?
Ah ! the first woman coming from Mycenai
Will pine to pour this poison in her ear,
Taunting sad Charon for his slow advance.
Iphigeneia !

IPHIGENEIA.

Why thus turn away ?
Calling me with such fondness ! I am here,
Father ! and where you are, will ever be.

AGAMEMNON.

Thou art my child . . . yes, yes, thou art my child.
All was not once what all now is ! Come on,
Idol of love and truth ! my child ! my child !

(*Alone.*)

Fell woman ! ever false ! false was thy last
Denunciation, as thy bridal vow ;
And yet even that found faith with me ! The dirk
Which sever'd flesh from flesh, where this hand rests,

Severs not, as thou boastedst in thy scoffs,
Iphigeneia's love from Agamemnon :
The wife's a spark may light, a straw consume,
The daughter's not her heart's whole fount hath quench'd,
'Tis worthy of the Gods, and lives for ever.

IPHIGENIA.

What spake my father to the Gods above ?
Unworthy am I then to join in prayer ?
If, on the last, or any day before,
Of my brief course on earth, I did amiss,
Say it at once, and let me be unblest ;
But, O my faultless father ! why should you ?
And shun so my embraces ?

Am I wild
And wandering in my fondness ?

We are shades !
Groan not thus deeply ; blight not thus the season
Of full-orb'd gladness ! Shades we are indeed,
But mingled, let us feel it, with the blest.
I knew it, but forgot it suddenly,
Altho' I felt it all at your approach.
Look on me ; smile with me at my illusion . . .
You are so like what you have ever been
(Except in sorrow !) I might well forget
I could not win you as I used to do.
It was the first embrace since my descent
I ever aim'd at : those who love me live,
Save one, who loves me most, and now would chide me.

AGAMEMNON.

We want not, O Iphigeneia, we
Want not embrace, nor kiss that cools the heart
With purity, nor words that more and more
Teach what we know, from those we know, and sink
Often most deeply where they fall most light.
Time was when for the faintest breath of thine
Kingdom and life were little.

IPHIGENIA.

Value them
As little now.

AGAMEMNON.

Were life and kingdom all !

IPHIGENEIA.³

Ah! by our death many are sad who loved us.
 The little fond Electra, and Orestes
 So childish and so bold! O that mad boy!
 They will be happy too.

Cheer! king of men!
 Cheer! there are voices, songs . . . Cheer! arms advance.

AGAMEMNON.

Come to me, soul of peace! These, these alone,
 These are not false embraces.

IPHIGENEIA.

Both are happy!

AGAMEMNON.

Freshness breathes round me from some breeze above.
 What are ye, winged ones! with golden urns?

THE HOURS.

(*Descending.*)

The Hours . . . To each an urn we bring.
 Earth's purest gold
 Alone can hold
 The lymph of the Lethean spring.

We, son of Atreus! we divide
 The dulcet from the bitter tide
 That runs athwart the paths of men.
 No more our pinions shalt thou see.
 Take comfort! We have done with thee,
 And must away to earth again.

(*Ascending.*)

Where thou art, thou
 Of braided brow,
 Thou cull'd too soon from Argive bow'rs,
 Where thy sweet voice is heard among
 The shades that thrill with choral song,
 None can regret the parted Hours.

[³ First ed.: "Ah! by our death many are sad who loved us.
 They will be happy too."]

CHORUS OF ARGIVES.

Maiden ! be thou the spirit that breathes
 Triumph and joy into our song !
 Wear and bestow these amaranth-wreathes
 Iphigeneia ! they belong
 To none but thee and her who reigns
 (Less chaunted) on our bosky plains.

SEMICHORUS.

Iphigeneia ! 'tis to thee
 Glory we owe and victory.
 Clash, men of Argos, clash your arms
 To martial worth and virgin charms.

OTHER SEMICHORUS.

Ye men of Argos ! it was sweet
 To roll the fruits of conquest at the feet
 Whose whispering sound made bravest hearts beat fast.
 This we have known at home ;
 But hither we are come
 To crown the king who ruled us first and last.

CHORUS.

Father of Argos ! king of men !
 We chaunt the hymn of praise to thee.
 In serried ranks we stand again,
 Our glory safe, our country free.
 Clash, clash the arms we bravely bore
 Against Scamander's God-defended shore.

SEMICHORUS.

Blessed art thou who hast repell'd
 Battle's wild fury, Ocean's whelming foam
 Blessed o'er all, to have beheld
 Wife, children, house avenged, and peaceful home !

OTHER SEMICHORUS.

We, too, thou seest, are now
 Among the happy, though the aged brow
 From sorrow for us we could not protect,
 Nor, on the polisht granite of the well
 Folding our arms, of spoils and perils tell.
 Nor lift the vase on the lov'd head erect.

SEMICHORUS.

What whirling wheels are those behind ?
 What plumes come flaring through the wind,
 Nearer and nearer ? From his car
 He who defied the heaven-born Powers of war
 Pelides springs ! Dust,⁴ dust are we
 To him, O king, who bends the knee,⁵
 Proud only to be first in reverent praise of thee.

OTHER SEMICHORUS.

Clash, clash the arms ! None other race
 Shall see such heroes face to face.
 We too have fought ; and they have seen
 Nor sea-sand grey nor meadow green
 Where Dardans stood against their men . . .
 Clash ! Io Pæan ! clash again !
 Repinings for lost days repress . . .
 The flames of Troy had cheer'd us less.

CHORUS.

Hark ! from afar more war-steeds neigh,
 Thousands o'er thousands rush this way.
 Ajax is yonder ! ay, behold
 The radiant arms of Lycian gold !
 Arms from admiring valour won,
 Tydeus ! and worthy of thy son.
 'Tis Ajax wears them now ; for he
 Rules over Adria's stormy sea.

He threw them to the friend who lost
 (By the dim judgment of the host)
 Those wet with tears which Thetis gave
 The youth most beauteous of the brave.
 In vain ! the insatiate soul would go
 For comfort to his peers below.
 Clash ! ere we leave them all the plain,
 Clash ! Io Pæan ! once again !

Hide these things away, Cleone ! I dare never show them to any but Pericles. I can reach no further than a chorus ; hardly that. Tragedy is quite above me : I want the strength, the pathos, the right language. Fie ! when there are so many who would teach me. Concede, that the shades were not

[⁴ First ed. : " But dust."]
 [⁵ First ed. : " mailed knee."]

happy at once in Elysium ; and that the Hours are not more shadowy than they. *Æschylus* brings into *our* world Beings as allegorical : and where shall we fix a boundary between the allegorical and divine ?

CCXXVI.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

You build your nest, Aspasia, like the swallow,
Bringing a little on the bill at once,
And fixing it attentively and fondly,
And trying it, and then from your soft breast
Warming it with the inmost of the plumage.
Nests there are many, of this very year
Many the nests are, which the winds shall shake,
The rains run thro', and other birds beat down ;
Yours, O Aspasia ! rests against the temple
Of heavenly Love, and thence inviolate,
It shall not fall this winter nor the next.

CCXXVII.⁶

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

You have encouraged me to proceed in the most difficult tract of poetry. Had I openly protested that the concluding act of Agamemnon, the Electra of our tragedian, dissatisfies me, he alone of the Athenians would have pardoned my presumption. But Electra was of a character to be softened rather than exasperated by grief. An affectionate daughter is affectionate even to an unworthy mother ; and female resentment (as all resentment should do) throws itself down inert at the entrance of the tomb. Hate with me, if you can hate anything, my Cleone ! the vengeance that rises above piety, above sorrow ; the vengeance that gloats upon its prostrate victim. Compunction and pity should outlive it ; and the child's tears should blind her to her parent's guilt. I have restored to my Electra such a heart as nature had given her ; torn by suffering, but large and alive with tenderness. In her veneration for the father's memory with his recent blood before her eyes, she was vehement in urging the punishment of the murderer. The Gods had commanded it at the hands of their only son. When it was accomplished, he himself was abhorrent of the

[⁶ Not in 1st ed.]

deed, but defended it as a duty ; she in her agony cast the whole on her own head. If character is redeemed and restored ; if Nature who always is consistent is shown so ; if pity and terror are concentrated at the close ; I have merited a small portion of what my too generous Cleone bestowed on me in advance.

THE DEATH OF CLYTEMNESTRA.

ORESTES AND ELECTRA.

ELECTRA. Pass on, my brother ! she awaits the wretch,
Dishonorer, despoiler, murderer. . . .
None other name shall name him . . . she awaits
As would a lover.

Heavenly Gods . . . what poison
O'erflows my lips ! . . .

Adulteress ! husband-slayer.

Strike her, the tigress !

Think upon our father . . .
Give the sword scope . . . think what a man was he.
How fond of her ! how kind to all about,
That he might gladden and teach us . . . how proud
Of thee, Orestes tossing thee above
His joyous head and calling thee his crown.
Ah ! boys, remember not what melts our hearts
And marks them ever more.

Bite not thy lip,
Nor tramp as an unsteady colt the ground,
Nor stare against the wall, but think again
How better than all fathers was our father.

Go . . .

ORESTES. Loose me then ! for this white hand Electra
Hath fastened upon mine with fiercer grasp
Than mine can grasp the sword.

ELECTRA. Go, sweet Orestes !
I knew not I was holding thee . . . Avenge him
(Alone.) How he sprang from me !

. . . Sure, he now has reaht
The room before the bath . . .

The bath door creaks !
. . . It hath creakt thus since he . . . since thou, O father !
Ever since thou didst loosen its strong valves
Either with all thy dying weight or strength
Agonised with her stabs. . . .

What plunge was that ?
Ah me !
. . . What groans are those ?

ORESTES. (*Returning.*) They sound through hell,
Rejoicing the Eumenides.*

She slew

Our father ; she made thee the scorn of slaves ;
Me (son of him who ruled this land and more)
She made an outcast. . . .

Would I had been so

For ever ! ere such vengeance. . . .

ELECTRA. O that Zeus

Had let thy arm fall sooner at thy side
Without those drops ! list ! they are audible,
For they are many . . . from the sword's point falling
And down from the mid blade !

Too rash Orestes !

Couldst thou not then have spared our wretched mother ?

ORESTES. The Gods could not.

ELECTRA. She was not theirs, Orestes.

ORESTES. And didst not thou, . . .

ELECTRA. 'Twas I, 'twas I, who did it ;
Of our unhappiest house the most unhappy !
Under this roof, by every God accursed,
There is no grief, there is no guilt, but mine.

ORESTES. Electra ! no !

'Tis now my time to suffer. . . .
Mine be, with all its pangs, the righteous deed.

CCXXVIII.⁷

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

I WILL never praise you again until you complete the tragedy. This is the time for it, now all the dramatic poets of your country are dead or silent. Not that I would invite you to have it represented or published ; but, believe me, the exertion of poetical power, in these elevations, throws off many of the mind's diseases.

Little or nothing of the sort can be effected by slenderer

* An ancient scholiast has recorded that the name of Eumenides was given to these Goddesses after the expiation of Orestes. But Catullus (called the learned by his countrymen) represents Ariadne invoking them by this appellation long before the Trojan war. The verses are the most majestic in the Roman language.

Eumenides ! quarum anguineis redimita capillis
Frons expirantes praeporat pectoris iras,

Huc, huc adventate ! &c.

[⁷ Not in 1st ed.]

and more desultory attempts. A bushel of garnets and amethysts and topazes is not worth a single ruby the size of the smallest ; and yet they are pretty things enough, and attract as many people. One single act of such a tragedy as you are able to compose, outvalues a thousand pieces of less cohesive and infrangible materials. Let others expatiate on trivial objects, ordinary characters, and uninteresting events ; let them be called poets by themselves and by their households : but remember, O Aspasia, that you have Athenians for judges, and that the progeny of heroes and gods is about to plead before them.

Again, I declare it, I will never praise you until you comply with me ; I will only love you ; and hardly that.

CCXXXIX.⁸

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I WILL never take so many steps up the heights of poetry, as to make any poet doubt whether he can overtake me. There is not enough honey in my cells to attract the wasps ; nor shall there be. If you really think I have done better in some parts than the generality, keep the secret ; at least from others ; and if you desire to see the tragedy completed . . . finish it yourself. You have often done work for me greatly more difficult. I never could work anything with the needle : and it was not because I feared its roughening my fingers, as you were pleased to say after you had finished it. I do not like any labour of the hands ; that is the matter of fact, not even so little as the writing out of a tragedy. I will, however, on this one occasion, give you a little assistance.

THE MADNESS OF ORESTES.

ORESTES AND ELECTRA.

ORESTES. Heavy and murderous dreams, O my Electra,
Have dragged me from myself.

Is this Mycenai ?

Are we . . . are all who should be in our house ?

[⁸ Not in 1st ed.]

Living? unhurt? our father here? our mother?
 Why that deep gasp? for 'twas not sigh nor groan.
 She then . . . 'twas she who fell! when? How? Beware!
 No, no, speak out at once, that my full heart
 May meet it, and may share with thee in all . . .
 In all . . . but that one thing,
 It was a dream.
 We may share all.

They live? both live?

O say it!

ELECTRA. The Gods have placed them from us, and there rolls
 Between us that dark river . . .

ORESTES. Blood! blood! blood!

I see it roll; I see the hand above it,
 Imploring; I see her.

Hiss me not back,
 Ye snake hair'd maids! I will look on; I will . . .
 Hear the words gurgle thro' that cursed stream,
 And catch that hand . . . that hand . . . which slew my
 father!

It can not be . . . how could it slay my father?
 Death to the slave who spoke it! . . . slay my father?
 It toss me up to him to earn a smile,
 And was a smile then such a precious boon
 And royal state and proud affection nothing?
 Ay, and thee too, Electra, she once taught
 To take the sceptre from him at the door
 Not the bath-door, not the bath-door, mind that! . . .
 And place it in the vestibule against
 The spear of Pallas, where it used to stand.
 Where is it now? methinks I missed it there.
 How we have trembled to be seen to move it!
 Both looking up, lest that stern face should frown
 Which always gazed on Zeus right opposite.
 O! could but one tear more fall from my eyes,
 It would shake off those horrid visages,
 And melt them into air.

I am not yours,
 Fell Goddesses. A just and generous power,
 A bright hair'd God directed me.

And thus
 Abased is he whom such a God inspired!

Into whose kingdom went they? did they go
 Together?

ELECTRA. Oh! they were not long apart.

ORESTES. I know why thou art pale; I know whose head
 Thy flower-like hands have garlanded; I know

(*After a pause.*)

For whom thou hast unbraided all thy love.
He well deserves it . . . He shall have it all.
Glory and love shall crown thee, my brave sister !

ELECTRA. I am not she of Sparta. Let me live
(If live I must, Orestes !) not unnamed
Nor named too often . . . speak no more of love,
Ill-omened and opprobrious in this house . . .
A mother should have had, a father had it,
O may a brother let it dwell with him,
Unchangeable, unquestioned, solitary,
Strengthened and hallowed in the depths of grief !

Gaze not so angrily . . . I dare not see thee,
I dare not look where comfort should be found.

ORESTES. I dare and do behold them all day long,
And, were that face away so like my mother's,
I would advance and question and compel them . . .
They hear me and they know it.

ELECTRA. Hear me too,
Ye mighty ones ! To me invisible !
And spare him ! spare him ! for without the Gods
He wrought not what he wrought : And are not ye
Partakers of their counsels and their power ?
O spare the son of him whom ye and they
Sent against Ilion, to perform your will
And bid the rulers of the earth be just.

ORESTES. And dare they frighten thee too ? frighten thee ?
And bend thee into prayer ?

Off, hateful eyes !
Look upon me, not her.

Ay, thus ; 'tis well.
Cheer, cheer thee, my Electra.

I am strong,
Stronger than ever . . . steel, fire, adamant . . .
But cannot bear thy brow upon my neck.
Can not bear these wild writhings, these loud sobs.
By all the Gods ! I think thou art half mad. . . .
I must away . . . follow me not . . . stand there !

Here is the prayer of Orestes, in his madness, to Apollo ;
and there follows, what is not immediately connected with it,
the Reply of the Priestess.

ORESTES. O King Apollo ! God Apollo ! god
Powerful to smite and powerful to preserve
If there is blood upon me, as there seems,
Purify that black stain (thou only canst)
With every rill that bubbles from these caves
Audibly ; and come willing to the work.

No ; 'tis not they ; 'tis blood ; 'tis blood again
 That bubbles in my ear, that shakes the shades
 Of thy dark groves, and lets in hateful gleams,
 Bringing me . . . What dread sight ! What sound abhor'd
 What screams ! They are my mother's : 'Tis her eye
 That through the snakes of those three furies glares,
 And makes them hold their peace that she may speak.
 Hast thy voice bidden them all forth ? they slink,
 Some that would hide away, but must turn back,
 And others like blue lightnings bound along
 From rock to rock ; and many hiss at me
 As they draw nearer. Earth, fire, water, all
 Abominate the deed of Gods commanded.
 Alas ! I came to pray, not to complain ;
 And lo ! my speech is impious as my deed

PRIESTESS OF APOLLO.

Take refuge here amid our Delphian shades,
 O troubled breast !
 Here the most pious of Mycenai's maids
 Shall watch thy rest
 And wave the cooling laurel o'er thy brow,
 Nor insects swarm
 Shall ever break thy slumbers, nor shalt thou
 Start at the alarm
 Of boys infesting (as they do) the street
 With mocking songs,
 Stopping and importuning all they meet
 And heaping wrongs
 Upon thy diadem'd and sacred head,
 Worse than when base
 Oegisthus (shudder not !) his toils outspread
 Around thy race.
 Altho' even in this fane the fitful blast
 Thou may'st hear roar,
 Thy name among our highest rocks shall last
 For ever more.

ORESTES. A calm comes over me : life brings it not
 With any of its tides : my end is near.
 O Priestess of the purifying god
 Receive her (*pointing to his sister*), and when she hath closed mine
 eyes,
 Do thou (weep not, my father's child !) close hers.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

MANY are now recovering from the fever, which no longer can be called a pestilence. Pericles, though he tells me he is weak in body and altered in appearance, will soon overcome his fears about me. We shall presently meet again. And so, Cleone, you really have ventured at last to accept the invitation of Euphorbia. If she talked to you of her son she was imprudent and indiscreet: perhaps in her earlier invitation she was hardly less so. But who can foresee the end of sorrow, or would foresee the end of happiness? It usually is nearer at hand. When we enter a place whence the beloved has been long absent, part of the presence seems to be left behind. Again we draw back from the window as we did before, because then we were told people were coming. Foolish! foolish! I am representing my own sensation in times past: girlish sensations, which never were Cleone's even in girlhood. Ah, Cleone! the beautiful smooth dove's plumage is hard and cold externally; but what throbbing, what warmth, what ardour, what tenderness, deep within! we must neither of us prefix ah! to anything in future: we must be the happiest of the happy. Here are two pieces of verse for you. That on Dirce was sent to me by Pericles; to prove that his Athenians can sport with Charon even now. The last Quaternion seems the production of an elderly man: and some of the ladies, on whom it was not written, and to whom it is not applicable, cry shame on him, beyond a doubt.

Stand closer round, ye Stygian set
 With Dirce in one boat conveyed,
 Or Charon, seeing, may forget
 That he is old, and she a shade.

Love ran with me, then walk't, then sate,
 Then said, come! come! it grows too late.
 And then he would have gone, but . . . no . . .
 You caught his eye: he could not go.

[⁹ Not in 1st ed.]

CCXXXI.¹⁰

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

WHERE on earth is there so much society as in a beloved child? He accompanies me in my walks, gazes into my eyes for what I am gathering from books, tells me more and better things than they do, and asks me often what neither I nor they can answer. When he is absent I am filled with reflections, when he is present I have room for none beside what I receive from him. The charms of his childhood bring me back to the delights of mine, and I fancy I hear my own words in a sweeter voice. Will he (O how I tremble at the mute Oracle of futurity!) will he ever be as happy as I have been? Alas! and must he ever be as subject to fears and apprehensions? No; thanks to the gods! never, never. He carries his father's heart within his breast. I see him already an orator and a leader. I try to teach him daily some of his father's looks and gestures, and I never smile but at his docility and gravity. How his father will love him! the little thunderer! the winner of cities! the vanquisher of Cleones!

CCXXXII.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

THE Lacedæmonians, we hear, have occupied not only all Attica, but are about to enter, if they have not entered already, the territory of their confederates, the Thebans, and to join their forces. Whither will you go, my Aspasia! Thessaly is almost as perilous as Boeotia. It is worse than criminal to be so nearly allied to the greatest man on earth, who must always have the greatest enemies. There are more who will forgive injury than there are who will forgive station: and those who assail in vain the power of Pericles, will exert their abilities in diminishing his equanimity and happiness. I fear your fondness will have induced you again to enter the city, that you may assuage and divide those cares which must weigh heavily on his wisdom and patriotism; and the more, since his health has

[¹⁰ Not in 1st ed.]

been undermined by the pestilence. I dare not advise you to forego a duty: but remember he has commanded you to remain away. Your return would afflict him. I am quite incapable of judging for you. Were I with you, then perhaps I might know many things which should influence your decision.

And can two years have passed over since this evil entered your city, without my flying to comfort you! Two years have indeed passed over; but my house has also had its days of mourning. The prayers of my father were heard: he died contentedly, and even joyfully. He told me he had implored of the Gods that they would bestow on me a life as long and happy as his own, and was assured they would. Until we have seen some one grown¹¹ old, our existence seems stationary. When we feel certain of having seen it (which is not early) the earth begins a little to loosen from us. Nothing now can detain me at Miletus, although when I have visited you I shall return. You must return with me, which you can do from any region but Attica. Pericles will not refuse, for you have already conciliated me his favour. In the meanwhile, do not think yourself bound by the offices of humanity, to bestow those cares on others which are all required for your own family. Do not be so imprudent as to let the most intimate of your friends persuade you to visit them. You have a child, you have a husband, and, without your presence, you possess the means of procuring every human aid for the infected. O that I were with you! to snatch you away from the approach of the distemper. But I sadly fear I should grow hard-hearted toward others, in your danger.

I must be with my Aspasia; and very soon.

O Athens! Athens! are there not too many of the dead within thy walls already? and are none there who never should have been! *

CCXXXIII.¹²

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

NEVER tell me, O my Pericles, that you are suddenly changed in appearance. May every change of your figure and counten-

[¹¹ First ed.: "grow."]

* This seems to refer to Xeniares.

[¹² Not in 1st ed.]

ance be gradual, so that I shall not perceive it: but if you really are altered to such a degree as you describe, I must transfer my affection . . . from the first Pericles to the second. Are you jealous! If you are, it is I who am to be pitied, whose heart is destined to fly from the one to the other incessantly. In the end it will rest, it shall, it must, on the nearest. I would write a longer letter; but it is a sad and wearisome thing to aim at playfulness where the hand is palsied by affliction. Be well; and all is well: be happy; and Athens rises up again, alert and blooming and vigorous, from between war and pestilence. Love me: for love cures all but love. How can we fear to die, how can we die, while we cling or are clung to the beloved?

CCXXXIV.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

THE pestilence has taken from me both my sons. You, who were ever so kind and affectionate to them, will receive a tardy recompense, in hearing that the least gentle and the least grateful did acknowledge it.

I mourn for Paralus, because he loved me; for Xanthippus because he loved me not.

Preserve with all your maternal care our little Pericles. I cannot be fonder of him than I have always been; I can only fear more for him.

Is he not with my Aspasia? What fears then are so irrational as mine? But oh! I am living in a widowed house, a house of desolation! I am living in a city of tombs and torches! and the last I saw before me were for my children.

CCXXXV.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

It is right and orderly, that he who has partaken so largely in the prosperity of the Athenians, should close the procession of their calamities. The fever that has depopulated our city,

returned upon me last night, and Hippocrates¹³ and Acron tell me that my end is near.

When we agreed, O Aspasia, in the beginning of our loves, to communicate our thoughts by writing, even while we were both in Athens, and when we had many reasons for it, we little foresaw the more powerful one that has rendered it necessary of late. We never can meet again. The laws forbid it, and love itself enforces them. Let wisdom be heard by you as imperturbably, and affection as authoritatively, as ever ; and remember that the sorrow of Pericles can arise but from the bosom of Aspasia. There is only one word of tenderness we could say, which we have not said oftentimes before ; and there is no consolation in it. The happy never say, and never hear said, farewell.

Reviewing the course of my life, it appears to me, at one moment, as if we met but yesterday ; at another, as if centuries had past within it ; for within it have existed the greater part of those who, since the origin of the world, have been the luminaries of the human race. Damon called me from my music to look at Aristides on his way to exile ; and my father pressed the wrist by which he was leading me along, and whispered in my ear,

“Walk quickly by ; glance cautiously ; it is there Miltiades is in prison.”

In my boyhood¹⁴ Pindar took me up in his arms, when he brought to our house the dirge he had composed for the funeral of my grandfather : in my adolescence I offered the rites of hospitality to Empedocles ; not long afterward I embraced the neck of Æschylus, about to abandon his country. With Sophocles I have argued on eloquence ; with Euripides

[¹³ The presence of Hippocrates at Athens during the plague cannot be said to be thoroughly proved. The letters attributed to him are probably spurious, and the account given in them of his conduct is such as might readily have occurred to any one composing an imaginary letter on a very famous epidemic. Thucydides, in his account of the plague, makes no mention of Hippocrates. Acron, a Sicilian physician, was probably dead at the time. An epitaph on him is extant, which is attributed to Empedocles or Simonides.]

[¹⁴ First ed. : “In my adolescence I offered the rites of hospitality Pindar and Empedocles : not long afterward I,” &c.]

on polity and ethics ; I have discoursed, as became an inquirer, with *Protagoras* and *Democritus*, with *Anaxagoras* and *Meton*. From *Herodotus* I have listened to the most instructive history, conveyed in a language the most copious and the most harmonious ; a man worthy to carry away the collected suffrages of universal *Greece* ; a man worthy to throw open the temples of *Egypt*, and to celebrate the exploits of *Cyrus*. And from *Thucydides*, who alone can succeed to him, how recently did my *Aspasia* hear with me the energetic praises of his just supremacy !

As if the festival of life were incomplete, and wanted one great ornament to crown it, *Phidias* placed before us, in ivory and gold, the tutelary Deity of this land, and the *Zeus* of *Homer* and *Olympus*.

To have lived with such men, to have enjoyed their familiarity and esteem, overpays all labours and anxieties. I were unworthy of the friendships I have commemorated, were I forgetful of the latest. Sacred it ought to be, formed as it was under the portico of *Death*, my friendship with the most sagacious, the most scientific, the most beneficent of philosophers, *Acron* and *Hippocrates*. If mortal could war against Pestilence and Destiny, they had been victorious. I leave them in the field : unfortunate he who finds them among the fallen !

And now, at the close of my day, when every light is dim, and every guest departed, let me own that these wane before me, remembering, as I do, in the pride and fulness of my heart, that *Athens* confided her glory and *Aspasia* her happiness to me.

Have I been a faithful guardian ? do I resign them to the custody of the Gods undiminished and unimpaired ? Welcome, then, welcome, my last hour ! After enjoying for so great a number of years, in my public and my private life, what I believe has never been the lot of any other, I now extend my hand to the urn, and take without reluctance or hesitation what is the lot of all.

CCXXXVI.¹⁵

ALCIBIADES TO ASPASIA.

I RETURNED to Athens in time to receive the last injunctions of my guardian. What I promised him, to comfort him in his departure, I dare not promise his Aspasia, lest I fail in the engagement; nevertheless I will hope that my natural unsteadiness may sometimes settle on his fixed principles. But what am I, what are all my hopes, in comparison with the last few words of this great man, surely the greatest that earth has ever seen, or ever will see hereafter! Let me repeat them to you, for they are more than consolation, and better. If on such a loss, I or any one could console you, I should abominate you eternally.

I found him surrounded by those few friends whom pestilence and despair had left in the city. They had entered but a little while before me; and it appears that one or other of them had been praising him for his exploits.

“In these,” replied he, “fortune hath had her share: tell me rather, if you wish to gratify me, that never have I caused an Athenian to put on mourning.”

I burst forward from the doorway, and threw my arms around his neck.

“O Pericles! my first, last, only friend! afar be that hour yet!” cried I, and my tears rolled abundantly on his cheeks. Either he felt them not, or dissembled or disregarded them; for, seeing his visitors go away, he began with perfect calmness to give me such advice as would be the best to follow in every occurrence, and chiefly in every difficulty. When he had ended, and I was raising my head from above his pillow (for I continued in that posture, ashamed that he, who spake so composedly, should perceive my uncontrollable emotion), I remarked I knew not what upon his bosom. He smiled faintly, and said,

“Alcibiades! I need not warn you against superstition: it never was among your weaknesses. Do not wonder at these amulets: above all, do not order them to be removed. The kind old nurses, who have been carefully watching over me

[¹⁵ See Plutarch for these particulars.]

day and night, are persuaded that these will save my life. Superstition is rarely so kind-hearted; whenever she is, unable as we are to reverence, let us at least respect her. After the good patient creatures have found, as they must soon, all their traditional charms unavailing, they will surely grieve enough, and perhaps from some other motive than their fallibility in science. Inflict not, O Alcibiades! a fresh wound upon their grief, by throwing aside the tokens of their affection. In hours like these we are the most indifferent to opinion, and greatly the most sensible to kindness."

The statesman, the orator, the conqueror, the protector, had died away; the philosopher, the humane man, yet was living . . . alas! few moments more.

CCXXXVII.

ALCIBIADES TO ASPASIA.

Must I again, Aspasia, torment my soul? again must I trouble yours? Has the pestilence then seized me, that I want hardihood, strength, understanding, to begin my labour? No; I walk through the house of mourning, firmly, swiftly, incessantly: my limbs are alert as ever.

Write it I must. Somebody was at the house-door;¹⁶ admittance was, it seems, not granted readily. I heard a voice, feeble and hoarse, and looking forth, saw two women, who leaned against the lintels.

"Let her enter, let her enter: look at her: she is one of us."

These words were spoken by the younger; and maliciously. Scarcely had she uttered them when her head dropped forward. The stranger caught and supported her, and cried *help! help!* and rubbed her temples, and, gazing on her with an intensity of compassion, closed her eyelids; for death had come over them. In my horror, my fright and dastardly cowardice I should rather call it, I failed to prevent or check her.

Aspasia has then her equal on the earth!

[¹⁶ First ed.: "gates."]

Aspasia is all that women in their wildest wishes can desire to be ; Cleone, all that the Immortals are. But she has friendship, she has sympathy : have those ?

She has, did I say ? And can nothing then bring me back my recollection ? not even she ! I want it not : those moments are present yet, and will never pass away.

She asked for you.

“ Aspasia,” answered I, “ is absent.”

“ Not with her husband ! not with her husband ! ” cried she.

“ Pericles,” I replied, “ is gone to the Blessed.”

“ She was with him then, while hope remained for her ! I knew she would be. Tell me she was.”

And saying it, she grasped my arm, and looked earnestly in my face. Suddenly, as it appeared to me, she blushed slightly : on her countenance there was, momentarily, somewhat less of its paleness. She walked into the aviary : the lattice stood open : the birds were not flown, but dead. She drew back ; she hesitated ; she departed. I followed her : for now, and not earlier, I bethought me it was Cleone. Before I came up to her, she had asked a question of an elderly man, who opened his lips but could not answer her, and whose arm, raised with difficulty from the pavement, when it would have directed her to the object of her inquiry, dropped upon his breast. A boy was with him, gazing in wonder at the elegance and composure of her attire, such as, in these years of calamity and of indifference to seemliness, can nowhere be found in Athens. He roused himself from his listless posture, beckoned, and walked before us. Reaching the garden of Epimedea, we entered it through the house ; silent, vacant, the doors broken down. Sure sign that some family, perhaps many, had, but few days since, utterly died off within its chambers. For nearly all the habitations, in all quarters of the city, are crowded with emigrants from the burghs of Attica. The pestilence is now the least appalling where it has made the most havoc. But how hideous, how disheartening, is the sudden stride before our eyes, from health and beauty to deformity and death ! In this waste and desolation there was more peacefulness, I believe, than anywhere else beyond, in the whole extent of our dominions. It was not to last.

A tomb stood opposite the entrance : Cleone rushed toward it, reposed her brow against it, and said at intervals,

“ I am weary : I ache throughout : I thirst bitterly : I cannot read the epitaph.”

The boy advanced, drew his finger slowly along, at the bottom of the letters, and said,

“ Surely they are plain enough. . . .

“ *Xeniades son of Charondas.*”

He turned round and looked at me, well satisfied. Cleone lowered her cheek to the inscription ; but her knees bent under her, and she was fain to be seated on the basement.

“ Cleone ! ” said I, . . . she started at the name . . . “ Come, I beseech you, from that sepulchre.”

“ The reproof is just,” she replied. . . . “ Here, too, even here, I am an alien ! ”

Aspasia ! she will gladden your memory no more : never more will she heave your bosom with fond expectancy. There is none to whom, in the pride of your soul, you will run with her letters in your hand. He, upon whose shoulder you have read them in my presence, lies also in the grave : the last of them is written.

